The Development of Civilization and Religion in India and its Influence on the World Society

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Contents

This book is dedicated to my mother

A Faithful Prayer Warrior

Author's Note

In November of 1999, the Pope visited India and attention was directed to him prior to his arrival. On October 25th, an article appeared in the New Indian Express titled, "Tell the Pope how Hindu he is", and it contained a gist of Francois Gautier's forthcoming book, "The Indian Origin of Things". In the article it was stated,

> *The Pope is arriving in India on the 5th of November. Does he know that he may be stepping on a land from which Christianity originated? Indeed, over the centuries, numerous historians and sages have pointed out that not only has Hinduism had a predominant influence on Christianity, but that many of the Christian rites could be directly borrowed from Buddhist and Hindu India.*
>
> *French historian Alain Danielou had noticed as early as 1950 that "a great number of events which surround the birth of Christ - as it is related in the Gospels - strangely remind us of Buddhists and Krishnaites legends".*

The article then goes on to state,

> *Great Indian sages, such as Sri Aurobindo or Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of the Art of Living, which is practiced in more than 80 countries, have often remarked that the stories recounting how Jesus came to India to be initiated, are probably true. Sri Ravi Shankar notes, for instance, that Jesus sometimes wore an orange robe, the Hindu symbol of renunciation in the world, which was not a usual practice in Judaism.*

Christians when they read such articles have two types of reaction. Some are apathetic, secure in their own faith, while others are shaken in their spiritual foundations wondering and groping for answers.

I was speaking sometime ago to a Brahmin who was a teacher of the Bhagavad Gita. He discussed the similarities between the two faiths with respect to the Gita and he pointed out the parallels in the doctrines of sacrifice, salvation by faith, and total surrender to God. However, he quietly went on to say that the Gita was written several hundred years before Christ and probably even Christ might have read the Gita.

Masih in his book titled, "Shankara's Universal Philosophy of Religion" writes about the striking similarity between the lives of Krishna and Jesus,

> *The phenomenon of 'Krsnajanmastame' in which the child*

> *Krishna is represented as a suckling at the mother's breast. Nanda, the foster-father of Krishna had gone to Mathura to pay his taxes (just as Joseph had gone to Bethlehem for census). Krishna was born in a cow-shed (Gokula exactly as Jesus was born in a manger); massacre of infants of Mathura by Kamsa (just as the massacre of infants by Herod); Krishna (like Jesus) had raised the son of a widow from the dead; Kubja anointed Krishna just as Mary had done with precious ointment.*

Well how about that!

Another issue facing Christians is that we are accused of being violent in converting people to Christ. Mr. Dayananda Saraswati in an article titled, "Conversion is Violence", in the New Indian Express, dated October 29, 1999, writes,

> *I am hurt by religious conversion and many others like me are hurt. Millions are hurt. There are many issues to be discussed regarding conversion, but I want to draw your attention to only the central issue here, which is this one-sided violence. Religious conversion is violence and it breeds violence. In converting, you are also converting the nonviolent to violence.*

However, when Mr. Sarawati was asked about organizations like the ISKCON spreading Hinduism, he said there was a difference between "converting" people and "convincing" them (The Hindu – Oct 31st, 1999). Mr. Saraswati has his own ashram in the United States (Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania). Interesting!

In January 1999, Christian missionary Graham Stewart Staines and his two young sons were burnt to death in Orissa. In September 1999, a Christian priest, Fr Arul Doss was also killed in Orissa. Observing these incidents Mr. M V Kamath wrote an article titled, "Mission Impossible, Putting an End to Conversion Activity" in the Times of India, dated October 13, 1999. In it he writes,

> *Some time ago, church authorities released a long list of atrocities perpetrated against Christians in different parts of India and at different times. The cumulative impression sought to be driven home is that minorities are no longer safe in India. This is an ominous development. Orissa's director-general of police Dilip Mahapatra has been quoted as saying that Fr Doss had received a "number of complaints and evidence" to the effect that the priest was involved in "illegal conversions" in violation of the Orissa Freedom of Religions Act, 1967.*

He then goes on the state that,

> *Christian missionary efforts at conversion under the guise of social work do not take place in places, say, like the Brahmin-dominated ward of Mylapore in Chennai. They are conducted in poor, illiterate and innocent tribal areas and in remote jungles far from the prying eyes of authority. Now a reaction seems to have set in.*

By the way I spent about four and half years from 1995 - 1999 ministering to Brahmins in the Brahmin dominated ward around Kapaleswara temple in Mylapore and they are yet to give an answer with evidence.

What are the answers to these issues? Was Jesus initiated in India? Did He read the Bagavad Gita and learn the Gospel from ancient Hindu thought and then begin His ministry? Was Christianity birthed from Hinduism?

Prof. Irfan Habib, an eminent historian, when interviewed by the Hindu (January 8th, 1997) said,

> *'Historical linguistics, inscriptions and the canons of archaeological excavations mean nothing to our friends in the VHP and the only thing that matters to them is working up religious sentiment.'*

Once these religious sentiments are invoked in the community, it automatically leads to religious confusion, communal conflicts and violence.

Over the centuries scholars like Prof. Irfan Habib have clearly exposed these deceptions, but the Church has chosen to remain blind to these strongholds against the Gospel. Many organizations mainly run today by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a religious wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), look for any anti-Christian material in the western world. They then project these liberal theologians as leading Bible scholars and prejudice the minds of educated Indians against Christ and Christians. This is one of the key reasons why the Church has been ineffective in reaching the educated communities.

This book traces the development of civilization and religion in India from the early civilizations. The development is systematically discussed so that truth can be brought out and deceptions exposed. Then each person after knowing the truth can decide their own spiritual pathway with total freedom.

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Chapter 1

Can Man Know Truth Without a Standard?

No man is without some knowledge of the truth, however, partial truth can be misleading since it engenders contradictions. Take for example the story of the blind men who visited an elephant. They each touched the elephant to comprehend it, one felt the tail, another a leg, another the side and so on. When they later sat together to discuss the elephant, each one of them had a contradictory perception of the elephant. One thought that the elephant was like a rope, another a pillar, another argued that the elephant was like a wall and so on. Each one of them had a portion of the truth and yet they argued and contradicted one another. They would have obtained the true picture if they had pieced their individual parts together and processed them. Thus overcoming the contradictions completes truth and the entire edifice of knowledge is conceived as a process of perception and comprehension, ascending stage by stage into widening ranges of apprehension.

In perception there is indeterminate perception when we sense a datum afresh and the scope or generality of its characteristics is not grasped. But when the pervasive features linking several particulars into a class are grasped as such and the particular datum is noted as characterized by them, we have determinate perception. Error is superseded by indeterminate perception. For example if a man were to measure his height by a steel rod of a certain length and he determines that his height is seven and a half times the length of the rod. A few days later he loses the steel rod and finds a wooden stick, which is one and half times longer than his steel rod. He then measures his height again with the wooden stick and finds that he is five times as tall. If the man does not perceive that his height has to be measured by a standard length, that is determinate perception, then his perception of his height will be in error.

However, there are truths beyond perception and they have to be ascended to through revelation. Revelation occurs over time and is recorded as scriptures. One of the respected texts of India, the Brahma Sutras, indicate that Brahman who is omniscient, omnipotent and all

merciful, can only be known by the scriptures which are the source of right knowledge.[1,2]

Revelation is of value in so far as it does not run into contradiction with perception and reasoning. There is no dogmatism or superstition, but is a genuine source of knowledge as it fulfills the criteria of non-contradiction. Within the body of revelation answers should be sought for questions for which perception is incompetent to answer conclusively. Examples are God, creation, etc.

Thus man with his limitations cannot perceive truth without the scriptures, which are his standard since otherwise he or she will fall into error due to indeterminate perception. As indicated earlier there is no dogmatism or superstition, but scriptures are a genuine source of knowledge as it fulfills the criteria of non-contradiction. The reliability of the scriptures should be tested by the same criteria that all historical documents are tested. These are

- The bibliographical test
- The internal evidence test
- The external evidence test

When we test the reliability of the various ancient extant writings, only the sixty-six books of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation stand out as the standard for all mankind.

Bibliographical Test of the Bible

The bibliographical test[3] is an examination of the textual transmission by which documents reach us. In other words, not having the original documents, the reliability of the copies are examined with respect to the number of manuscripts (MSS) and the time interval between the original and extant copy.

In the case of the Old Testament until the recent discovery of the

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1. Swami Vireswarananda and Swami Adidevananda, **Brahma Sutra**, **Sri-Bhasya**, with text, English rendering, comments according to Sri - Bhasya of Sri Ramanuja, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1995, Sutras 1.1.2-1.1.3, pages 83-85.
2. Swami Vireswarananda, **Brahma Sutra**, with text, word-for-word translations, English rendering, comments according to the commentary of Sri Sankara, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1996, Sutras 1.1.2 - 1.1.3, pages 20-24
3. Josh McDowell, **Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Volume I**, India Campus Crusade for Christ, 1979, page 47.

Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest extant Hebrew MS was around 900 AD, about 1300 years after it was completed. However, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a number of Old Testament manuscripts have been found which scholars date before the time of Christ. The manuscripts include fragments of every book of the Old Testament except Esther. One of the scrolls found was a complete MS of the Hebrew text of Isaiah dated around 125 B.C. The other biblical MSS are dated between 200 BC to 68 AD. The impact of this discovery is in the close agreement of the Isaiah scroll (125 BC) with the Massoretic text of Isaiah (916 AD) 1000 years later which shows the unusual accuracy of the copyists of the Scriptures over a thousand year period.[1]

In the case of the New Testament, the number of manuscripts, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is large and this can be said of no other ancient book in the world. There are over 5000 Greek manuscripts, about 10,000 in Latin Vulgate, and thousands of portions of the New Testament in existence today. No other ancient document even comes close. In comparison the Illiad by Homer (dated around 8th c BC) is second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive and the first complete preserved text of Homer dates from the 13th c AD.[2]

Regarding textual comparison, Philip Scaff[3] in his book titled, "Comparison to the Greek Testament and the English Version" concludes that

> *Only 400 of the 150,000 caused doubt about the textual meaning, and only 50 of these were of great significance. Not one of the variations Schaff says altered "an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passage, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.*

Another strong support for the textual evidence and accuracy is the ancient translations of the New Testament into other languages.

> *The earliest Latin translation was made before AD 200, and the earliest Syriac dates from the late second or early third century. Hence, if we can gather from the existing copies of these translations what were the Greek words which their authors*

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1. Sir Frederic Kenyon, **Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts**, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1958, page 69.
2. Josh McDowell, **Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Volume I**, India Campus Crusade for Christ, 1979, page 48.
3. Ibid - page 53.

were translating, we know what was read in that particular passage in a Greek MS current in the second century when the translation was made; and this brings us back much nearer to the time when the originals of the New Testament books were themselves written.[1]

Thus, based on the bibliographical evidences, the textual accuracy of the Bible is without dispute.

The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other book in the world. Scholars are satisfied that they possess substantially the true text of the principal Greek and Roman writers whose works have come down to us, of Sophocles, of Thucydides, of Cicero, of Virgil; yet, our knowledge of their writings depends on a mere handful of manuscripts, whereas the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundred, and even thousands.[2]

The Internal Evidence Test of the Bible

In this test one must listen to the claims of the documents under analysis and not assume fraud or error unless the author disqualifies himself by contradictions or known factual inaccuracies. In the Bible no contradictions have been proven and many alleged contradictions have been cleared by archaeology and systematic understanding. A lack of systematic theology has led to the confusion of many.

The External Evidence Test of the Bible

History, science and archaeology have externally confirmed the authenticity of the Bible and no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical passage.

Archaeologist W. F. Albright[3] (*The Biblical period from Abraham to*

1. Sir Frederic Kenyon, **Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts**, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1958, page 58.
2. Ibid, page 55.
3. Josh McDowell, **Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Volume I**, India Campus Crusade for Christ, 1979, page 80

Ezra, Harper, 1960) writes,

> *Until recently it was the fashion among biblical historians to treat the patriarchal sagas of Genesis as though they were artificial creations of Israelite scribe of the Divided Monarchy or tales told by imaginative rhapsodists around Israelite campfires during the centuries following their occupation of the country. Eminent names among scholars can be cited for regarding every item of Gen. 11-50 as reflecting late invention, or at least retrojection of events and conditions under the Monarchy into the remote past, about which nothing was thought to have been really known to the writers of later days.*
>
> *Archaeological discoveries since 1925 have changed all this. Aside from a few die-hards among older scholars, there is scarcely a single biblical historian who has not been impressed by the rapid accumulation of data supporting the substantial historicity of patriarchal tradition. According to the traditions of Genesis the ancestors of Israel were closely related to the semi-nomadic peoples of Trans-Jordan, Syria, the Euphrates basin and North Arabia in the last centuries of the second millennium B.C., and the first centuries of the first millennium.*

In 1872 a scholar of cuneiform called George Smith while working through the tablets from Assurbanipal's library in Nineveh, came across a part of a Babylonian version of the biblical Flood story. A part of the story is quoted here, to show the similarities to the Old Testament account. Here the Noah figure is called Uta-Napishtim.[1]

> *What I had, I loaded thereon, the whole harvest of life*
> *I caused to embark within the vessel; all my family and relations,*
> *The beasts of the field, the cattle of the field, the craftsmen,*
> *I made them all embark.*
> *I entered the vessel and closed the door ....*
> *When the young dawn gleamed forth*
> *From the foundation of heaven a black cloud arose;*
> *Abad roared in it,*
> *Nabu and the King march in front ....*
> *Nergal seizeth the mast,*
> *He goeth, Inurta leadeth the attack ....*

1. Ruth Whitehouse, **The First Cities**, Phaidon, Oxford, 1977, pages 23-24.

The tumult of Abad ascends to the skies.
All that is bright is turned into darkness,
The brother seeth the brother no more,
The folk of the skies can no longer recognize each other.
The gods feared the flood,
They fled, they climbed into the heaven of Anu,
The gods crouched like a dog on the wall, they lad down ....
For six days and nights
Wind and flood marched on, the hurricane subdued the land.
When the seventh day dawned the hurricane was abated, the flood
Which had waged war like an army;
The sea was stilled, the ill wind was calmed, the flood ceased.
I beheld the sea, its voice was silent
And all mankind was turned into mud!
As high as the roofs reached the swamp! ....
I beheld the world, the horizon of sea;
Twelve measures away an island emerged;
Unto mount Nitsir came the vessel,
Mount Nitsir held the vessel and let it not budge ...
When the seventh day came
I sent forth a dove, I released it;
It went, the dove, it came back,
As there was no place, it came back.
I sent forth a swallow, I released it;
It went, the swallow, it came back,
As there was no place, it came back.
I sent forth a crow, I released it;
It went, the crow, and beheld the subsidence of the waters;
It eats, it splashes about, it caws, it comes not back.

The story made newspaper headlines at the time and the public reacted with astonishment. The ***Daily Telegraph*** offered Smith 1,000 guineas to go to Nineveh and find the part of the story that was still missing. Smith made the trip in the spring of 1873 and within a matter of days found a fragment, seventeen lines long, which filled the only serious gap in the British Museum. Since that time other versions of the Flood story have become available, including a Sumerian version in which the Noah figure is called Ziusudra, in place of Uta-Napishtim of the Akkadian version.[1]

1. Ruth Whitehouse, **The First Cities**, Phaidon, Oxford, 1977, pages 23-24.

When we study the development of early civilizations, the evidences presented by the scholars clearly portrays the event that took place as recorded in the book of Genesis in the Bible,

> *So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*[1]

The earliest civilizations that arose in the world developed in the late fourth and the third millennia BC in parts of Asia and north Africa. The three large alluvial systems of the Tigris-Euphrates, the Nile and the Indus supported three great ancient civilizations. Other urban communities also arose during this time, however, unlike the great civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Indus, these communities did not form part of a unified economic system, and these small units, though clearly able for a time to support large, wealthy and organized societies, were much weaker than the vast civilizations of the alluvial lowlands.

Scholars indicate that when comparatively studying the three great civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Indus Valley,

> *There is no question of Egyptian or Indus civilization being established by colonists from Sumer. There are no close similarities of culture of any kind; indeed it is hard to emphasize sufficiently the differences between these civilizations. What similarities exist are all on the conceptual level: the practice of irrigation agriculture, the existence of cities, of monumental art and architecture, of writing, the use of mud-brick and so on. The actual nature of the irrigation works, the form of the cities and their buildings and the nature of the written script are completely different in all three areas.*[2]

The evidence clearly shows the break up of the community, linguistic separation and scattering that would have taken place when the single speech was broken up into many languages by God. After the scattering, these civilizations developed independently and at a later date started trade relations with each other, and this with time resulted in cultural and religious exchanges.

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1. Genesis 11:8-9
2. Ruth Whitehouse, page 190.

Another interesting fact in this evidence is the use of brick in the scattered locations. The building technology known prior to the scattering as seen in Genesis is,

> *And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.*[1]

Thus this known technology was carried by the various groups divided by language to their various areas of settlement when they were scattered by God over the face of the earth.

In conclusion, man cannot know the truth without a standard, the scriptures, and only the sixty-six books of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation stand out as the standard for all mankind. The Bible was written by a diversity of human writers over an extended period of time, and no such writing can truly stand up to the above tests except when the author of such a writing was God himself and men wrote as they were inspired by His Spirit.

1. Genesis 11:3

Chapter 2

Distortion of History

On November 3rd, 1998, an article appeared in The Hindu titled, "Project on history terminated". It stated,

While worldwide academic research is getting more diversified and focused, touching off a boom in area-specific encyclopedias, dictionaries and other reference books, the Human Resource Development Ministry under Dr. Murali Manohar Joshi is rolling it back.

The Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR), reconstituted recently amid a controversy over some new - more BJP-friendly - faces, has scrapped a five-year old project which would have produced India's first "Dictionary of Social, Economic and Administrative Terms in Indian Inscriptions." A number of eminent scholars, including Professors R.S.Sharma, Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib and B.N.Mukherjee were working on it and over 50,000 entries - enough to make up two volumes - had already been compiled.

No explanation has been offered for aborting it and the minutes of the meeting at which the decision was taken simply say that after a "threadbare discussion" it was "resolved to conclude the project and terminate the present commitments."

In six volumes, the dictionary would have documented all those inscriptions found in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan which are backed by empirical evidence. Each inscription would have been evaluated for its authenticity by 54 historical principles, the bottom line being that unpublished inscriptions should not be ordinarily included. And this is suspected to be the reason for scrapping the project.

It is stated that the Sangh Parivar (an RSS/VHP group) *with its preference for "faith" rather than facts would have been uncomfortable with a document which leaves no scope for individual interpretation of the sort that saw pro-BJP historians and archaeologists come up with unsubstantiated "evidence" on the Ayodhya dispute.*

Attempts to construct history around isolated "discoveries" would not succeed if there is a standard reference book which

decides what should be "in" and what should be excluded for lack of sufficient evidence. "It would no longer be enough to say that just because a tablet has been found near the disputed site in Ayodhya it is a proof that this is where Ram was born or that a temple existed there," said one ICHR scholar.

In fact, the project was intended precisely to prevent "freewheeling" history and avoid the kind of confusion which prevailed during the Ayodhya crisis when all manner of "evidence" was bandied about by the Sangh Parivar to justify its campaign against Babri Masjid. It was taken up in 1992-93 and would have taken another ten years to complete. Terminating it means a loss of Rs. 4.5 lakhs which have been spent on it.

Meanwhile, a controversy has erupted over the reconstitution of the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) and it is being alleged that, as in the case of ICHR, many of the new faces in ICSSR have ideological affinity with the Sangh Parivar.

Inscriptions serve as a reliable source for reconstructing history and the work of the ICHR would have been invaluable. As already indicated (see author's note) historical linguistics, inscriptions and the canons of archaeological excavations mean nothing to the VHP, the only thing that matters to them is working up religious sentiment and fanaticism.

Religious organizations like the VHP raise massive funds at home and abroad under the guise of charity, but spent on promoting violence, communal hatred and historical deception. In an article titled, "Congress(I) demands CBI probe into VHP funds" in The Hindu, August 17, 1999, it is stated that,

The Congress (I) today alleged that the VHP was guilty of misuse of funds it received in the name of "charity" and had demanded an inquiry by the CBI to determine if the organisation was using these funds to create an anti- minority atmosphere in the country. Releasing a copy of the VHP's audited accounts for the financial year 1997-1998, the AICC(I) spokesperson, Mr. Kapil Sibal, said while the VHP received Rs.2.70 crores, only Rs. 10,101 was spent on 'charitable' purposes of 'help to poor'. Mr. Sibal's contention was that the rest of the funds "were utilised for religious propaganda or for purposes the nature of which is not evident from the income and expenditure statement."

More interestingly, Mr. Sibal said that the VHP had floated a

number of outfits, by different names like the Bhartiya Jansewa Sansthan, Bharat Kalyan Pratishthan, Hindu Dhaam, Vishwa Hindu Foundation, Shree Gujarat Vanvaasi Kalyan Parishad, Hindu Heritage Foundation, Gowardhan Niryaat Sanvardhan Parishad, and Shri Ram Janambhoomi Nyas. According to Mr. Sibal, except one, all these outfits operated from one address "with the same set of people controlling their funds dispensations."

The central issue, according to Mr. Sibal, was whether these organisations could be separately granted status as charitable organisations, thereby being qualified to receive tax exemptions donations from India and abroad "while its central control remains firmly in the hands of the same coterie that controls the VHP."

In particular, the Congress(I) found it objectionable that the VHP funds should also be going to the Bajrang Dal, and that these funds should be spent "on compilation of pre- fabricated structures allegedly for Ram Mandir at Ayodhya."

Therefore, the Congress wants a CBI investigation which would determine whether the donations were put to use other than for which these were received. Also, an investigation should be able to find out whether these organisations fulfilled the conditions spelled out in Section 11 and 12 of the Income Tax Act. In addition, it needed to be determined "what is the extent of foreign funding received by them through banking and other channels from foreign countries in previous weeks, months and years?" And, "how many branches in foreign countries each of these organisations have on a permanent basis together with their foreign addresses?"

The Congress contention was that the VHP, the central fulcrum of the Hindutva movement, had been receiving funds which were not properly audited or accounted for. The AICC(I) went a step further and demanded a probe aimed at finding out how the VHP funneled funds to outfits in Orissa, Gujarat, Karnataka and Kerala, which had witnessed periodic campaigns against the minorities.

Organizations like the VHP propagate much deception against the Gospel. *The Organiser*, is well known as the magazine of the Rashtriya

1. Dr. N S Rajaram, **Christianity's Global Crisis**, The Organizer, March 31, 1996.

Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). In an article it is stated that,

> *The Christian myth and the Gospel story of Jesus and his teachings is a complete, later fabrication.*[1]

Millions in India and around the world are fed these deceptions. An anonymous Hindu sent me the following letter titled, "A Sincere Message to the Christians of India"

> *Three reasons why you have been the victims of the greatest hoax in world history …*
>
> - *Jesus Christ never existed.*
> - *The Gospels are later fabrications created by Christian propagandists.*
> - *Every Christian priest from the Pope down to the street corner evangelist thumping the Bible is an impostor selling self-interest as "salvation".*
>
> *This is the result of fifty years of research by the world's greatest Biblical scholars and historians following the discovery of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls.*
>
> *Here are some examples of what some of the world's greatest Biblical scholars are saying after studying the Dead Sea Scrolls:*
>
>> *… the passion of the messiah [Crucifixion of Jesus Christ] was a common expectation and not a historical event. (Neil Asher Silberman, author of The Hidden Scrolls)*
>>
>> *As far as details in the New Testament record of Jesus' life is concerned, the scrolls give added ground for believing that many incidents are merely projections into Jesus' own history of what was expected of the Messiah. (John Allegro, author of The Dead Sea Scrolls)*
>>
>> *The personification of this concept [or the persecution of Christ] in the Gospel presentation of the Messianic events in Palestine in the first century is a most revolutionary development… that has not ceased exercising its influence on mankind even now. (Robert Eisenman, the world's greatest authority, author of Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered)*
>
> *so, THIS is the truth about Christ and Christianity - and not what some Bible touting evangelist whose livelihood depends on your believing him tell you. People in the West have realized this and Christianity has collapsed as a result.*
>
> *The die is cast. Let us understand the real truth instead of following a falsehood presented as TRUTH. The West has come to terms with it. It is time that India did too. And unlike in the*

> *West where the collapse of Christianity has left a vacuum, Indians are fortunate in having their own matchless civilization to fall back upon. Truth holds no fears for them. They can return to their ancient roots.*

Interesting! Thus it is not difficult to see why the Gospel of Jesus Christ has had little impact on the educated in India. In these days in order for us to effectively present the Gospel, we need to understand the barriers against it. Historical distortions have to be dealt with so that truth can be seen.

Chapter 3

Who is a Christian?

What classifies one as a Christian? What are his or her characteristics? To answer these questions one has to first look at the word Christian since it is a grossly misused and misunderstood term today. We find it first in the Bible in the book of Acts,

> *And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*[1]

A key point should be noted here, it was the disciples who were called Christians. There were two types in those who followed Jesus, one were the disciples and the other were called the crowds or multitudes who followed Christ for self gain. It was quite simple to separate the two groups since the slightest discomfort was sufficient to cause the multitudes to fall back. A distinct example is seen in Matthew chapter five verse one where Christ desiring to teach His disciples sees a multitude following him.

> *And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.*[2]

Notice the simple stress of climbing a mountain separated the multitudes from the disciples. Generally multitudes follow Christ for personal gain like a healing, personal problems, etc. However, today this distinction has been lost and we carelessly call the multitudes as Christians. God has called us to be disciples and to make disciples of the multitudes that would seek Him.

Next let us note the character of a disciple. Jesus said,

> *And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me,* ***cannot be my disciple****. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient*

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1. Acts 11:26
2. Matthew 5:1

to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.[1]

The contextual meaning of the hate is explained by Christ,

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.[2]

Thus a Christian or disciple of Christ is one who denys himself, takes up his cross daily and follows Jesus Christ living a life consistent with God's Word, the Bible. This concept of total surrender and devotion to God is seen in the Bhakthi movement which developed in India under the influence of Christianity.

James also defines **three evidences** in a person's life that clearly show that he is a Christian - Disciple of Jesus Christ,

Compassion for those in need - What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. James 2:14-17

Obedience to God - But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith

1. Luke 14:25-35
2. Matthew 10:37-38

made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. James 2:20-24

Willing to risk one's life for another - Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. James 2:25-26

The mandate of Christ in the Great Commision is to,

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Matt 28:19,20

The Church which was meant to be a living organism making disciples of all nations, instead, became an organization run on worldly wisdom and principles. This organization which many think of as the Church has martyred many Christians who questioned its wrong practices over the years. A detailed account of this dark history can be found in **Fox's Book of Martyrs** obtainable in most Christian book shops.

Chapter 4

Indus Valley Civilization

(3000 BC - 1500 BC)

This civilization is one of the three great early civilizations that arose in the late fourth and third millennia BC around the three large alluvial systems of the Tigris-Euphrates, Nile and Indus rivers. In 1920 archaeologists announced the discovery of extensive urban ruins in the Indus Valley which pre-dated the earliest archaeological sources and this has caused scholars to re-examine their views on the different phases of Indian culture.

Until the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization, the development of literature and culture in India was always credited to the Aryans**.** The Rg Veda which speaks in such derogatory terms of the enemies subdued by the Aryan tribes, gives the impression that they were all savage barbarians.[1] The Brahmins for centuries have degraded the original inhabitants of India with the intention of self elevation, preservation and oppression. These ancient dwellers in India were Dravidians, and in fact, their culture had developed a highly sophisticated way of life.

The existence of the Brahui tribe in Baluchistan, to the west of the Indus, who speak a Dravidian language like South Indian Tamil, gives evidence that a migration of people or culture did occur. I. Mahadevan reviewing Asko Parpola book titled, "Deciphering the Indus Script" writes[2],

> *It has been pointed out that the complete absence of the horse among the animals so prominently featured on the Indus seals is good evidence for the non-Aryan character of the Indus Civilization. Parpola quotes from a fairly uptodate and authoritative report by Richard Meadow that there is as yet no convincing evidence for the horse remains from archaeological sites in South Asia before the end of the second millenium BC. The survival of Brahui, a Dravidian language, spoken even today by large numbers of people in Baluchistan and the adjoining*

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1. Edited by John Hinnells and Eric Sharpe, **Hinduism**, Oriel Press in association with Blackie, India, 1972, page 8.
2. I. Mahadevan, **An Encyclopaedia of the Indus Script**, International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics, Volume XXVI, Number 1, January 1997.

> *areas in Afghanistan and Iran, is an important factor in the identification of the Indus Civilization as Dravidian. Brahui belongs linguistically to the North Dravidian group with several shared innovations with shared innovations with Kurukh and Malto; no dialectal features connect it with the South or Central Dravidian languages. Hence Parpola concludes that Brahui represents the remnants of the Dravidian language spoken in the area by the descendants of the Harappan population.*
>
> *Survival of place-names is generally a good indicator of the linguistic pre-history of a region. Parpola points out several place-names in the northwestern region like nagara, palli and pattna with good Dravidian etymologies.*

Also the Harappa religion shows many similarities with those elements of Hinduism which are especially popular in the present Dravidian culture and Father H. Heras, one of the authorities who have tried to read their script has even clamed that their language was a very primitive form of Tamil.[1]

The Indus cities were well planned and constructed with wide streets, brick buildings, well-equipped private dwellings, large granaries and a drainage system.. In comparison with Egypt and Mesopotamia where a number of temples are found, there seem to be very few public buildings in the Indus cities. The only one of note is the great bath at Mohenjo-Daro which appears to have been used for certain rituals. As of date no king's tomb has been discovered and scholars ponder if this civilization was a democracy.

Evidence for the religious beliefs and practices of these people is slight, since the Indus script cannot be read and apart from the bath, there appears to be no religious structure. A certain amount of information has been derived from scenes depicted on seal-amulets and from the terra-cotta figurines found at different sites throughout the area. However such evidence is open to wide interpretation. The predominance of female figurines and seals depicting a horned goddess in association with the sacred pipal tree are generally regarded as evidence of the worship of a mother goddess who presided over fertility and birth and who may have acted as guardian and protector of the dead.[2]

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1. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder That Was India,** Rupa & Co, 1994, pg 25.
2. Edited by John Hinnells and Eric Sharpe, **Hinduism**, Oriel Press in association with Blackie, India, 1972, page 9.

One of the most striking figurines found is the bronze of a dancing girl who is completely naked except for a series of bangles almost covering one arm. Her posture is provocative, one arm on her hip and one leg slightly bent. It has been suggested that this dancing girl was representative of a class of prostitutes used in religious rituals. The great bath was probably used by the cult at Mohenjo-daro for some form of ceremonial bathing as a prelude to ritual cohabitation with prostitutes associated with the mother goddess, carried out in the small antechambers adjoining the bath[1].

Three seals from Mohenjo-dara portray certain elements of religious art seen later in India. These depict a figure seated either on the ground or on a low stool; on two seals the head has three faces and on all it wears a horned headdress. On a single seal[2] the figure is attended by an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros, a buffalo, and two antelopes or goats. This worship may have later merged (syncretism) with Siva as Pasupati, the Lord of the Beasts.[2,3,4]

The appearance of coarser type of pottery indicates invaders in the Indus cities. At Mohenjo-daro large rooms were divided into smaller ones and mansions became tenements; potters' kiln were built within the city boundaries, and one even in the middle of the street. The street plan no longer maintained. Hoards of jewelry were buried. Evidently the city was over populated and law and order was becoming a problem, perhaps because the invaders were already ranging the provinces and city was full of newcomers.[5] The Indus Valley Civilization seems to have been in a gradual process of internal decay and stagnation.

The cause or causes of the end of the Indus civilization are not easy to determine. At Mohenjo-daro groups of sprawling skeletons in this period suggests some sort of massacre or invasion. Among the scanty remains of these invaders there is clear evidence of the presence of the horse.[6] However it is probable that the fall of this great civilization was partly due to the widespread migratory movements of charioteering

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1. Edited by John Hinnells and Eric Sharpe, **Hinduism**, Oriel Press in association with Blackie, India, 1972, page 10.
2. Ruth Whitehouse, **The First Cities,** Phaidon Press, Oxford, 1977, page 140.
3. Edited by John Hinnells and Eric Sharpe, **Hinduism**, Oriel Press in association with Blackie, India, 1972, page 10.
4. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder That Was India,** Rupa & Co, 1994, pg 23.
5. Ibid, page 27.
6. Ibid, page 28.

peoples which altered the face of the whole civilized world in the 2nd millennium BC.[1] The invasion of Canaan by the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua is generally dated around 1400 BC, may have been the cause of these migratory movements.

The Indus Valley Civilization is of utmost importance in understanding the development of culture and civilization in India. The people were Dravidians who presently form about 88% of India's population and for centuries they have been degraded as barbaric and uncivilized until they were civilized by the the Aryans who constitute 12% of India's population. However, when the Indus Valley was discovered in 1920, this deception was exposed and presently certain communal elements in the Indian society have been working rather feverishly to predate the arrival of the Aryans with flimsy evidences and arguments.[2] This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

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1. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder That Was India,** Rupa & Co, 1994, page 29.
2. Vijaya Pushkarna, **Looking Beyond Indus Valley**, The WEEK, July 26, 1998.

Chapter 5

The Aryans

The word Aryans is derived from the Sanskrit word 'arya' which means noble, and it is a fairly recent term referring to a mythical race whose key founding value is racism. It is generally stated that they entered India through the north-west sometime after 1000 BC, however, no archaeological data has been found to fix the date of this event. The term Aryan is applied to the three so-called forward castes in India - Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas who constitute about 12% of India's population. However, this minority group has for the most part gained control of the religious, political and economic power in India today.

The Brahmins are also called the Rg Vedic people and are classified as the religious patriarchs of all religious thought in India and the world. The Rg Veda is considered very ancient and the foundation of all religious thought. Prior to the arrival of the Vedic people, the Indian population, the Dravidians, were considered uncivilized, who were later cultured and illuminated by the Vedic people. The Rg Veda which speaks in such derogatory terms of the enemies subdued by the Aryan tribes, gives the impression that they were all savage barbarians.[1] However, with the discovery of the Indus Valley civilization in 1920, centuries of error in our history has been exposed. The ancient dwellers in India, the Dravidians, were highly cultured and had developed an advanced and sophisticated way of life.

In tracing the history of these Vedic people it is seen that they have been involved in manipulating society for self gain. The Brahmin ancestors, the Vedic people, are the authors of caste system with them at the top of the hierarchy. Over the years the caste system has been used to cause divisions and conflicts in society, and many innocent lives have been either seriously hurt or killed, and certain people are living under the most oppressive circumstances. The vicious religious philosophy of the caste system is also referred to as brahminism. Today brahminism is also practiced by Dravidians to oppress and manipulate fellow Dravidians!

Brahminism is contrary to the Gospel since man is liberated in Jesus

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1. Edited by John Hinnells and Eric Sharpe, **Hinduism**, Oriel Press in association with Blackie, India, 1972, page 8.

Christ. The religion and culture of India is highly misunderstood, and mission strategies are based on this misunderstanding. Today mission strategies like the people movement approach have ignorantly brought the caste system into the Church, and, the Church has become ineffective. The crucial thinking in this strategy is not to disturb the culture of the people involved in the movement into the church, and casteism is considered very ancient and part of the culture. However, the ridiculous nature of this thinking is best illustrated by a modern day example. Let's say that there was a people movement amongst Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), how would the church handle it? Would it cater to them by having a separate church so that they would feel comfortable? Would it wait 3 to 4 generations before addressing their racist attitudes? By the way did not Hitler say that he was a Christian?

In tracing the Brahmin ancestry, the best evidence seen thus far is their religious affinity to the Rg Veda. That is why they are often referred to as the Vedic people.[1] The earliest evidence of Vedic worship is seen in on a cuneiform tablet excavated at El-Amarna in Egypt, on a document from Bogazkoy in Anatolia (Asia Minor)[2]. The tablet is in Hittite cuneiform and written in the Akkadian language, and is an adjunct to a treaty between the Hittite king Suppiluliuma and his son-in-law, the Mitannian king Kurtiwaza, and it contains a long list of the gods of the peoples who were parties to it.[3] The tablet is dated around the 14th century BC.

The gods are invoked to witness the conclusion of the treaty and guarantee its observance. The gods of the Mitannians are named in these forms: Mi-it-ra, U-ru-ua-na, In-da-ra, and Na-sa-at-ti-ia-an-na. It is evident that these names correspond to Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and Nasatuau of the Vedic pantheon. The following curse is pronounced against the Mitannians: "If you, Kurtiwaza, the prince, and the sons of the Hurri country do not fulfil the words of the treaty, may the gods, the lords of earth, blot you out, you and the Hurri men together with your country, your wives, and all that you have" .[4]

In this treatise, Mithra (or Mitra) is invoked as the god of contract

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1. Vijaya Pushkarna, **Looking Beyond Indus Valley**, The WEEK, July 26, 1998.
2. Ehsan Yarshater - editor, **The Cambridge History of Iran**, Volume 3(I), Cambridge University Press, 1983, pages 411-412.
3. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **Hinduism**, Oxford University Press, 1979, page 42-43.
4. For the original document see **Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazkoy** (1916-68). Translation by A. Goetze is in **Ancient Near Texts relating to the Old Testamant,** edited by J.B. Pritchard. Third Edition (1969), p.205.

and mutual obligation. In short Mithra may signify any kind of communication between men and whatever establishes relations between them.[1] The treatise is in the time frame of Israel invading the land of Canaan and their occupation causes a migratory movement in Canaan and surrounding areas. Thus these early Vedic elements spread to other nations.

The worship of Mithra is next seen in Iran where he has evolved and become the god of the sun, justice, contract and war. Before Zoroaster (6th century BC) the Iranians had a polytheistic religion and Mithra was the most important of their gods.[2] However, Zoroastrianism, a monotheistic faith, displaces the importance of Mithra. Zoroaster's teaching centered on Ahura Mazda, who is the highest god, creator of heaven and earth and alone is worthy of worship.[3]

Zoroaster taught the concept of two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Ahriman, the enemy of God who was evil. Each kingdom had its followers who had the freedom to choose, however, in the end the kingdom of God vanquishes the kingdom of Ahriman.[3]

An interesting piece of evidence surfaces when we look at cultic reforms due to Zoroastrianism.

> *Zoroaster forbade all sacrifices in honor of Ahriman or of his adherents, the daevas, who from pre-Zoroastrian times had degenerated into hostile deities. In the prevailing religious tradition, Zoroaster probably found that the practice of sacrificing cattle, combined with the consumption of intoxicating drinks (haoma), led to orgiastic excess.*[3]

The Vedic people had a similar potent drink called soma which is the same as haoma in Persia, drunk only at sacrifices, and caused the most invigorating effects.[4] Another interesting fact is also seen, Indra to whom nearly one-quarter of the hymns are dedicated[5] appears in the Avesta as a demon.[6]

In the Bible after the incident of the den of lions king Darius made the

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Macropaedia Volume 12, page 289.
2. Ibid, page 288.
3. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Macropaedia Volume 19, page 1170.
4. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder That Was India,** Rupa & Co, 1994, pg 237.
5. Edited by John Hinnells and Eric Sharpe, **Hinduism**, Oriel Press in association with Blackie, India, 1972, page 17.
6. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Macropaedia Volume 19, page 1171.

following declaration,

> *Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*[1]

The influence of Daniel continued in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.[2] The monotheistic faith, teachings and reforms of Zoroastrianism strongly suggests that this religion arose through the influence of Daniel in the Medo-Persian Empire. Apart from the biblical evidence for the source of Zoroastrianism no other can be found.

Zoroastrianism seems to have slowly decayed into fire worship. Early reliefs show the king praying to Ahura Mazda before a flaming altar. However, later the king appears on coins without Ahura Mazda, dressed in the costume of a fire priest, praying directly to a fire. This change occurred around the late 5th or 4th century BC.[3] The worship of fire, Agni, is also of importance to the Vedic people.

When Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire around 330 BC, the old structure of worship appears to have broken down completely and about the worship of Mithra in Persia no more is heard.[4] However, the worship of Mithra spreads to other parts of the world. In the Roman Empire,

> *Mithraism is a western mystery cult which sprang into existence in the last century BC and flourished during the first centuries of the Roman empire. Its adherents were almost exclusively small groups in the Roman army. Renan's famous and too-often quoted dictum "If the world had not become Christian, it would have become Mithraic"*[5]

and further,

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1. Daniel 6:25-27.
2. Daniel 6:28.
3. Ehsan Yarshater - editor, **The Cambridge History of Iran**, Volume 3(I), Cambridge University Press, 1983, page 101.
4. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Macropaedia Volume 12, page 289.
5. Ehsan Yarshater, page 566.

In the Roman Empire from about the year 136 AD onward, there are hundreds of dedicatory inscriptions to Mithra.[1]

However, Mithraism had evolved to become acceptable to the Roman world and it was a religion of loyalty to the emperor. Prior to Constantine's time it was the chief opponent of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire at it's peak (2nd c AD) extended over Italy, Spain and Portugal, Britain, France, Belgium, Germany west of the Rhine, Switzerland, Rumania, Balkans, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and North Africa. The last Roman Emperor was dethroned in 476 AD and in the confusion that followed Europe entered the Dark Ages (476 to 918 AD). Christianity spreads in Europe, and the Papacy develops.

During this time, the Arabs develop as a civilization (7th to 12th c AD) which was far advanced to anything in Europe. Their basis was India, Persia and Greece. Around the 11th c AD, pilgrimages began to the Holy Land and a new code of chivalry developed - to give ones life for the defenseless and the church. There were four principal crusades and the first was from 1096AD to 1099AD. From around 1300 to 1500 AD, Europe transitioned from its medieval culture to modern times.

In India, the first evidence of Vedic worship is seen in 183 BC in the Sunga Empire,

For some fifty years Mauryan kings continued to rule in Magadha until about 183 BC when Pusyamitra Sunga, a brahman general of Brhadratha, the last Mauryan king, succeeded in gaining power by a palace revolution. Pusyamitra was a supporter of the orthodox faith and revived the ancient Vedic sacrifices, including the horse sacrifice.[2]

Most scholars agree that the Sungas were the ancestors of the Brahmins, though they were not called Brahmins at this time. However, their affinity to the Vedic practices and the usage of Mitra in their names (Pusyamitra's son was called Agnimitra) are evidence that they were Vedic people. The Sungas were overthrown by the Kanvas in 72 BC, and the Kanva dynasty came to an end in 28 BC. The Kanvas are also considered in the Brahmin ancestry.[3] The Sungas and the Kanvas were weak empires which did not last very long.

Thus the present Brahmin race can be traced from the Sunga empire

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Macropaedia Volume 12, page 289.
2. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder That Was India,** Rupa & Co, 1994, pg 58.
3. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Micropaedia Volume V, page 697.

through Persia to western Asia. They were nomads and their gods were inspired by nature and sacrifice is an important part of their ritual. However,

> *"Sacrificial ritual was beginning to be replaced by the practice of bhakti (personal devotion), positing a personal relationship between the individual and the deity"*[1]

The numerous vedic deities lost significance and,

> *The numerous solar deities of the Vedas were merged in Hinduism into a single god, usually known as Surya ("the Sun")*[2]

Numerous temples of the sun are found in Gupta and medieval times. Amongst these is the "Black Pagoda" of Konarak, Orissa, built in the 13th century AD. This sun temple contains very explicit pornographic sculptures.[3]

After the fall of the Sungas and Kanvas nothing significant is heard of the Brahmin ancestors for a while and there was religious and social harmony in the land,

> *Till the close of the sixth century AD different religious sects lived together in admirable harmony.*[4]

However, after the death of Harshavardhana in 647 AD, his empire crumbled and there was great confusion in India. From this confusion arose the Rajputs,

> *The Rajputs maintained their unchallenged supremacy over northern India from the death of Harsha to the first Turk invasion. That is why, the period between 647 to 1200 AD is known as the Rajput period.*[5]

and

> *The Rajputs were the descendants of Sakas, Hunas, and Kushans who came to India and settled here. Later, they entirely mixed themselves in the Indian society and almost lost their individuality.*[6]

The foreign origin of the Rajputs is based on the fact that the word Rajput does not appear in ancient Sanskrit literature prior to the rise of the Hunas.[7]

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Micropaedia Volume V, page 356.
2. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder That Was India,** Rupa & Co, 1994, page 315.
3. A.L. Basham, pages 363-364.
4. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and G. Srinivasachari, **Advanced History of India**, page 305.
5. K.L. Khurana, **Political and Cultural History of India**, 1992, page 359.
6. Ibid, page 289.
7. Ibid, page 359-360

Khurana points out the salient features[1] of the Rajput period,

1. India remained free from foreign attacks during the Rajput period except for a mild invasion of Sindh by Arabs. This invasion also proved to be ineffective due to the sudden death of Muhammad bin Qasim, the leader of the Arabs. The absence of foreign raids rendered the people lazy and uncaring of military preparations. The feeling of patriotism was getting weak and it affected the national unity. Moreover, it created a sense of superiority and pride among Indians that they were omnipotent.
2. India had no relations with the other countries of the world. It made the Indian civilization and culture to stagnate. Relations with China and the West were snapped due to political changes in Central Asia. Having been cut off from intercourse with progressive countries India could not forge ahead.
3. It is stated by foreign travelers like Ibn-Batuta that prostitution was not considered as an evil. There were several shortcomings in religion. People were habitual of drinking. Morality, chastity and religious contemplation had bidden adieu, and intoxication and luxury were the order of the day. The monasteries and dwelling places of monks and nuns had become the centers of immorality and luxury.
4. The entire northern India was divided into small principalities. These always remained at daggers drawn with one another. The political unity of India received a great setback during this period. These small kingdoms were getting weaker all the more day by day due to their mutual conflicts. They failed to patch up their difference even at the time of foreign attacks.
5. The presence of Charans and Bhats (bards) was a new feature of the Rajput period. They were appointed at the courts to recite poems in praise of their masters. They also used to sing the heroic deeds of the ancestors of Rajputs. They used to accompany the army to the battlefield. Their duty was only to sing the heroic deeds and rouse the feelings of courage and bravery in the soldiers. They often used to act as messengers.

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1. K.L. Khurana, **Political and Cultural History of India**, 1992, page 362.

Further the caste system was the foundation stone of the Rajput society. The posts of Purohitas (family priest or court chaplain) were reserved exclusively to the Brahmin ancestors and the posts were hereditary. These Purohitas were never given capital punishment since they were considered an authority in the field of religion and spiritualism and they seem to have been the chief advisors to the king during the Rajput period. The Rajput society was marked by a lack of unity, mutual quarrels and pride. Sati system, child marriage and female infanticide were evil practices rampant.[1]

Thus based on these evidences we can see that the Brahmin ancestors and Rajputs set up the caste system during the Rajput period to control the Dravidian population of India which constitute about 88% of India's population today. The Brahmin ancestors became the religious leaders and the Rajputs, the rulers or Kshatriyas. This was the beginning of the mythical race called the Aryans. The foreigners who were involved in trade were later included as the Vaishyas[1].

It is often amusing to read the contradictions of historians when describing the Rajputs. They are described as brave and valorous, but with whom? Their wars were basically internal fighting with one another due to personal conflicts and mutual jealousies.

During the Rajput period the Brahmins and Kshatriyas developed the Laws of Manu or Varnashrama Dharma in order to bring racism into Indian society under the guise of religion. They elevated themselves as a superior caste by birth and degraded the Dravidians as a lower caste by birth. The Deivanayagams write[2],

> *In Northern India after the reign of Harsha, that is in the 7th c.A.D., the reign of 'Huns' started spreading and they are referred to as demonic hordes by the historians. Huns were the cruel rulers who tyrannically suppressed and oppressed the Dravidians in northern India from 7th c.A.D. to 12th c.A.D. During this period the 1) Persians 2) Greeks 3) Sakas 4) Romans 5) Kushans and the 6) Huns who came to India in different periods without any religion were united as Aryans (Sanskrit word for noble) and were ruling. During this time, the Aryan laws like Manudharma Sasthra, which elevate the Aryans (foreigners) and degrade the Dravidians (Indians) were devised.*

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1. M. Deivanayagam and D. Devakala, **Christianity in Hinduism**, Dravidian Religion Trust, 1997, page 107.
2. Dravida Samayam, June 1998

Chapter 6

Racism Today

Racism today is based on one's skin color or varna. As a well-developed theory in the world society is a fairly recent phenomenon. The Encyclopedia Britannica states that,

> *The 18th century was predominantly environmentalist in its outlook; the science of that day tended to attribute social behavior either to climatic and geographical environment or to sociocultural factors. Racism as a widely accepted "scientific" theory of behavior did not appear until the 19th century, which was the age of racism par excellence. Although Charles Darwin himself was not a racist, his theory of biological evolution was extended to social evolution, giving birth to the theory of social Darwinism. Mankind was regarded as having achieved various levels of evolution, culminating in the white-European civilization. These stages of evolution were thought to be related to the innate genetic capabilities of the various peoples of the world. By the second half of the 19th century, racism was accepted as fact by the vast majority of Western scientists, and various forms of it were popularized through the writings of Joseph-Arthur, comte de Gobineau. Houston Stuart Chamberlian, Rudyard Kipling, Alfred Rosenberg, and Adolf Hitler.*

If this type of racism was prevalent in Shakespeare's day, he would not have written his play Othello which portrays a black man marrying a white woman early in the 17th century!

A question naturally rises as to why this type of racism which is prevalent today, arose in the world society in the 19th century, though it has been prevalent in India from about the 8th century, that is from the time of of the Rajputs. The answer is found in the fact that in 1794 William Jones started publishing his translation of Manu Dharma which was in Sanskrit into English. The British Dictionary of National Biography states,

> *As a great Jurist Jones understood that the power of England in India must rest on good administration, and that the first requisite was to obtain a thorough mastery of the existing systems of law in India, and to have them codified and explained. In short, in his own words, 'he purposed to be the Justinian of India' (TEIGNMOUTH, ii. 88). With this idea in his mind, he decided to*

prepare a complete digest of Hindu and Muhammadan law, as observed in India : and to assist him in the colossal labor he collected round him learned native pundits and Muhammadan lawyers. He did not live long enough to complete this task, but he was enabled to publish the first stages in his masterly rendering of the 'Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinances of Menu (Manu), 1794.........

The Brahmins were quick to portray Manu Dharma as the Hindu law, and through the translation of William Jones this poison entered the society of the world. As stated earlier racism was accepted as fact by a vast majority by the second half of the 19th century and many European scholars under it's influence started identifying with the Brahmins. A.A. McDonnell in his book titled 'India's Past' (Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1927) writes,

"This work summarizes India's intellectual history, which in its various aspects has been the subject of my studies for slightly more than half a century (1875 to 1926). It sets forth in nine chapters the mental development of the most easterly branch of Aryan civilization since it entered India by land till it came in contact by sea with the most westerly branch of the same civilization after a separation of at least 3,000 years. The four centuries that have since elapsed (1498 to 1926) are here touched upon only as showing the most recent distribution of the Indian vernaculars and the rise of their literature, as well as the process by which the development of the purely indigenous period gradually became known to the new-comers from the west....These two civilizations, starting from a common source, have after a separation of at least 3,000 years again become united during the last four centuries, representing together a quarter of the total of the earth's inhabitants. During these four centuries the new-comers from the west have gained acquaintance with and recovered the history of India's past mental development. At this, as set forth in the following pages, will, I trust, contribute something to clearer mutual understanding by two civilizations which in their origin were one and the same".

Remember Hitler who identified himself with the mythical Aryan race, and the world is yet to recover from Nazism. If racism was to be eradicated, there must be a specific and coordinated action both within the

communities themselves and society at large, particularly through the educational system from pre-primary school, upwards and onwards . In India presently the reverse of this is happening. Religious organizations like the VHP raise massive funds at home and abroad under the guise of charity, but use it to promote violence and communal hatred through historical deception.

Thus, racism is destructive to the world society and it is the responsibility of every Christian to be a salt against this poison. God's Word says,

> *Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8*

Chapter 7

The Significance of Sanskrit

The earliest epigraphic evidence on languages employed in India comes from the inscriptions of Asoka inscribed in third century B.C. Asoka took care that his messages were intelligible to all and he used a particular kind of Prakrit. Even more remarkable is the fact, which has been recently discovered, that for those people who at the time lived in Afghanistan, his message was given in Greek as well as Aramaic. One of the Greek inscriptions is a translation of the Kalinga Edict, and the Greek of the inscriptions is not inferior in style to the classical Greek of Greek literature. In such circumstances neglect of Sanskrit by Asoka, if the language was in use, would be contrary to all his practice.[1] So, the absence of Sanskrit in his inscriptions indicates that it did not exist at that time, as otherwise he would have certainly used it.

Before Christ in India there were many foreign invasions which introduced many foreign languages. These mixing with the early Indian languages led to what is often called a Prakrit which was diverse in nature. The first evidence of classical Sanskrit is attested by an inscription dating around A.D.150 in the Brahmi script**.**[2,3] It records the repair of a dam originally built by Chandragupta Maurya, and also contains a panegyric in verse which can be regarded as the first literary composition in classical Sanskrit. It is at Girnar in Kathiawar and was inscribed by Rudradamana, the Saka Satrap of Ujjayini, on the same rock on which the Fourteen Rock Edicts of Asoka were also found. It is significant that Rudradamana employed classical Sanskrit in a region where about four hundred years before him Asoka had used only Prakrit.

A key evidence often presented in the dating of Sanskrit is Patanjali's Vyakarana - Mahabhasya (Great Commentary). The Mahabhasya is both a defense of the grammarian Panini against his chief critic and detractor Katyayana and a refutation of some of Panini's aphorisms. Patanjali is dated anywhere from 2nd c BC to 5th c AD[4].

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1. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **Hinduism**, Oxford University Press, 1979, page 38.
2. Ibid, page 39.
3. R. Venkataraman, **Indian Archaeology**, Ennes Publications, 1985, page 223.
4. The New Encyclopardia Britannica, Micropaedia Vol VII, 1982, page 793.

On Patanjali's date, the composition of the Mahabhasya and its early tradition, Joshi and Roodbergen write[1] ,

> *It is nearly unanimously agreed that Patanjali has lived around 140 BC. But as stated by Winternitz, we are not in a position to confirm that this is the correct date. The question largely depends on the other question, namely, whether Patanjali was the author of the examples he quotes. According to Tarn, there is nothing conclusive in Patanajli's assumed date, precisely because his grammatical examples are, or in any particular case may be, not necessarily his own composition but traditional examples. Nor are the dates assigned to Panini and Katyayana in the fourth and third century BC more than a working hypothesis, that is, ornate guesswork.*

The period 1st c BC to 1st c AD is extremely significant in the history of India. The Sakas (Scythians) were one of the three main groups who supplanted the Greeks in the North West. The others were the Pahlavas (Parthians) and Kushans (Yeuh-Chih). The North West was divided into several petty Greek Kingdoms which easily fell victim to the great wave of Scythians which took place in the middle of the first century B.C. The Indo-Scythian empire of the Sakas was conquered by the advancing Indo-Parthians, upon the coins of whom appear names[2] such as Gondophares, Orthagnes, etc. The date of Gondophares[2] is firmly established by the Takht-i Bahi inscription of the year 103, which is also dated to the twenty-sixth year of Gondophares' reign. The first date must be reckoned according to the "era of Azes" (57 B.C.) and therfore corresponds to 46 A.D., while the accession year of Gondophares is consequently 20 A.D.

Tradition[3,4] records that Thomas set out for India immediately after the Crucifixion, i.e. 30 A.D., thus the appearance of Gondophares in the Acts of Thomas is therefore chronologically acceptable.[1] Thus during Gondophares' rule the apostle Thomas brought the first knowledge of Christianity to India.[2,3,4,5]

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1. S.D. Joshi and J.A.F. Roodbergen, **Patanjali's Vyakarana-Mahabhasya**, Poona University Press, 1976, No. 11, page i.
2. A.D.H. Bivar, **The Cambridge History of Iran**, Vol 3 (1), Edited by Ehsan Yarshater, Cambridge University Press, 1983, page 197.
3. Wright, **The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostle**, page 146.
4. A.T. Olmstead, **The Chronology of Jesus' life**, Anglican Theological Review XXIV. 1 (Evanston, Ill. 1942), page 23.
5. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder that was India**, page 61.

The Sakas in the North West of India broke relations with the Iranians and were under the dominion of the Pahlavas. There were two dynasties of Saka Satrapas with considerable independence on behalf of the Pahlava suzerains, but as regards to language and culture, the Sakas mostly adopted those of the Pahlavas. The Pahlavas were soon driven out by the Kushans and in Kanishka's reign gained control of the western half of northern India. However, the Sakas maintained control of their territory. Sukumari writes[1],

> *Following Alexander's campaigns, an extensive area of northern India came under the rule of Greek governors. The second century BC saw the establishment of the Satavahana kingdom on the Godavari of Andhara, which flourished for a couple of centuries until in 30 BC it even challenged Magadha. Magadha itself was experiencing a slow decline, owing to foreign invasions. The first of these invaders, the Sakas and the Bactrian Greeks, penetrated into Kapisa, upper Kabul and Gandhara and from there passed on to the Yamuna and the lower Indus Valley, and at times raided neighbouring areas. Later, the Saka power was threatened by the Pahlavas, that is, the Parthians. Greek rule in India virtually came to an end in 30 BC, and the Sakas remained in power in the whole of northern India. Around 100 BC the nomadic Kushan tribes from Sinkiang overran Bactria, and arrived in India early in the first century AD. The first Kushan king Kujula Kadphises defeated the Parthians and conquered Kabul. His successor Wima attacked Gandhara (c AD 50), defeated and overthrew the Sakas and occupied the Indus Valley and some eastern areas upto Surasena. Around AD 78 Wima's successor Kanishka I ascended the throne and overran northern India. This date, AD 78, is acknowledged as marking the beginning of the Saka era.*

The stone pillar inscription[2,3] of Samudra Gupta (AD 330 to 380) written in Sanskrit and a late Brahmi script called the Gupta script is an undated inscription incised on an Asokan pillar at Allahabad. Composed by Harisena, a commander-in-chief of the king it describes elaborately the

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1. Sukumari Bhattacharji, **History of Classical Sanskrit Literature**, Orient Longman, 1993, page 17.
2. R Venkatraman, **Indian Archaeology (A Survey)**, Ennes Publications, 1993, page 224.
3. D.B. Diskalkar, **Selections from Sanskrit Inscriptions (2nd to 8th c AD)**, Classical Publishers, 1977, page 23-43.

moral, intellectual and military achievements of this king. This inscription possibly dates 350 AD.

Candra Gupta II (AD 380 to 415) subjugated the Saka territories, and Sanskrit which developed in the Pahlava-Saka Empire gained eminence in the Gupta Empire as evidenced by the Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta mentioned earlier. During his reign, art, architecture and sculpture flourished and the cultural development of ancient India reached its climax. However, this change is certainly due to the Pahlava-Saka language, literature, art and culture now part of the Gupta Empire.

Another interesting fact is that the Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta mentions King Vishnugopa of Kanchi (Pallavas 4th to 9th c AD) who was defeated by Samudra Gupta and then liberated about the middle of the 4th c AD. The southern Pallavas are often linked with the North Western Pahlavas, however, this is not conclusive. Through these invasions, the Gupta language and culture spread south.

The spread of Sanskrit South is first evidenced by the Talagunda stone pillar inscription of Kadamba Kakusthavarman[1] in the Shimoga District, Karnataka dated between 455 and 470 AD. It is written in late southern Brahmi inscribed in the reign of Santivarman (450 to 470 AD). It is a postthumous record of Kakusthavarman.

Sanskrit then spreads in the South evidenced by the inscriptions in Early Grantha, dating from the 5th to 6th c. AD on copper plates and stone monuments from the kingdom of the Pallavas near Chennai (Madras). The Grantha alphabet, which belongs to the writing system of southern India, was developed in the 5th c. AD to mainly write Sanskrit. From the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions which indicates that Sanskrit was replacing the dialects.

Further more research on the development of writing scripts in India certainly puts a rather late date on these Sanskrit writings. Until the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization in 1920, ancient India seemingly had two main scripts in which languages were written, Brahmi and Kharosti. One theory is that the Brahmi script developed under Semitic influence around 7th c. BC, and was originally written from right to left, however, in India it is found from the 5th c BC written left to right. A coin[2]

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1. R Venkatraman, **Indian Archaeology (A Survey)**, Ennes Publications, 1993, page 224.
2. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia Vol II, page 226.

of the 4th c BC found in Madhya Pradesh, is inscribed with Brahmi characters running from right to left.

The Kharosti script came into being during the 5th c. BC in northwest India which was under Persian rule. Although the origin of the Brahmi script is uncertain, the Kharosti script is commonly accepted as a direct descendant from the Aramaic alphabet. The direction of writing in the Kharosti script is as in Aramaic, from right to left.

In the later centuries of its existence, Brahmi gave rise to eight varieties of scripts. Three of them - the early and late Mauryas and the Sunga - became the prototypes of the scripts in northern India in the 1st c. BC and AD. Out of these developed the Gupta writing which was employed from the 4th to the 6th c. AD. The Siddhamatrka script developed during the 6th c. AD from the western branch of the eastern Gupta character. The Siddhamatrka became the ancestor of the Nagari script which is used for Sanskrit today. The Nagari developed in the 7th to 9th c. AD, and has remained essentially unaltered since[1].

However, certain other factors need to be considered to get the complete picture of script development in India. In 1920 archaeologists announced the discovery of extensive urban ruins in the Indus Valley which pre-dated the earliest literary sources and which caused scholars working on ancient texts to re-examine their views on the different phases of Indian culture. The Rig Veda which speaks in such derogatory terms of the enemies subdued by the Aryan tribes, gives the impression that they were all savage barbarians. The Brahmins ancestors for centuries have degraded the original inhabitants of India with the intention of self elevation, preservation and oppression. These ancient dwellers in India were Dravidian, and in fact, their culture had developed a highly sophisticated way of life which compares with that of contemporary urban civilizations in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The extensive excavations carried out at the two principal city sites, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, both situated in the Indus basin, indicates that this Dravidian culture was well established by about 2500 B.C., and subsequent discoveries have revealed that it covered most of the Lower Indus Valley. What we know of this ancient civilization is derived almost exclusively from archaeological data since every attempt to decipher the script used by these people has failed so far. Recent analyses of the order

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1. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia Vol 9, page 450.

of the signs on the inscriptions have led several scholars to the view that the language is not of the Indo-European family, nor is it close to the Sumerians, Hurrians, or Elamite, nor can it be related to the structure of the Munda languages of modern India. If it is related to any modern language family it appears to be Dravidian akin to Old Tamil, presently spoken throughout the southern part of the Indian Peninsula.

What this points to is the existence of a system of writing far more ancient than what was originally considered. For instance when the Indian scripts are grouped, the southern scripts form a class of their own. The Grantha alphabet, which belongs to the writing system of southern India, developed in the 5th c. AD and was mainly used to write Sanskrit. Inscriptions in Early Grantha, dating from the 5th to 6th c. AD are on copper plates and stone monuments from the kingdom of the Pallavas near Chennai (Madras).

A key area of error is linguistic research, and in India it is based on the erroneous Aryan theory projecting civilization in India as uncivilized till the entry of the so called Aryans. Today, groups like the RSS and VHP will vehemently deny this theory realizing the implication of the Indus Valley discovery in 1920. Scholars write[1],

> *During the Middle Ages various suggestions had been put forward with regard to language development, but religious prejudices frequently stood in the way of a correct understanding of historical processes; thus one widespread view was that all languages somehow descended from Hebrew. Then is his justly famous Anniversary Discourse of 2 February 1786 (published in Asiatick Researches 1.415-431 (1788)) Sir William Jones brought basic features of Sanskrit to the attention of western scholars. He contended that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin stem from a 'common source, which perhaps, no longer exists' and surmised that Germanic and Celtic derive from the same source 'though blended with a very different idiom'. ………*
>
> *A good deal of what will be said in the following paragraphs is speculation. Linguistic reconstruction can hardly ever be 'proved'; only very rarely do further discoveries confirm the reconstructions at which scholars arrived on theoretical grounds.*

1. The Cambridge History of the English Language, Vol 1, The Beginnings to 1066, edited by Richard M. Hogg, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pages 26&27.

The last statement is so important to remember: Linguistic reconstruction can hardly ever be ‘proved’; only very rarely do further discoveries confirm the reconstructions at which scholars arrived on theoretical grounds.

The influx of foreign invaders through the North West over the centuries, forced the Dravidian culture South. Originally Grantha was used for writing Sanskrit only, and Sanskrit was later transliterated with Nagiri after the 7th c. AD. Scholars over the years have indicated that many Hindu writings have been tampered with, and certainly this could have happened during the transliteration process. The later varieties of the Grantha script were used to write a number of Dravidian Languages, and the modern Tamil script certainly seems to be derived from Grantha.

The scriptures of Hinduism are written in Sanskrit, and epigraphic evidence clearly shows that they could not have been written before the second century A.D. The Christian thought is seen in the Hindu scriptures and this influence traces back to Christian Gospel preached by the Apostle Thomas first to the Pahlavas.

The bibliographical evidences indicate that the Vedas are written in the Grantha and Nagari scripts, and according to tradition Veda Vyasa, a Dravidian, compiled and wrote the Vedas. The Grantha script belongs to the southern group of scripts and Veda Vyasa being a Dravidian would certainly have used it. Since the earliest evidence for Grantha is only in the 5th c. AD, the Vedas were written rather late.

Chapter 8

Brahmanas and Samanas

Regarding ancient philosophy, Megasthenes[1] states:

All that has been said regarding nature by the ancients is asserted also by philosophers out of Greece, on the one part in India by the Brachmanes, and on the other in Syria by the people called the Jews.

Megasthenes also states that the Jewish writing is the earliest of all these. Also, the Jews divided their scriptures into three books, often called the TaNaK:

- Torah (Books of Moses)
- N'vi-im (Prophets)
- K'tuvim (Writings)

The Jewish dispersion spread worldwide including India after the breakup of the Israel and Judah around the 6th c BC.

The society[2] of India in Megasthenes time was divided in seven classes. The philosophers are the first in rank but form the smallest class in point of number. Their services are employed privately by persons who wish to offer sacrifices or perform other sacred rites, and also publicly by the kings at what is called the Great Synod, wherein at the beginning of the new year all the philosophers are gathered together before the king at the gates, when any philosopher who may have committed any useful suggestion to writing, or observed any means for improving crops and the cattle, or for promoting the public interests, declares it publicly. If any one is detected giving false information thrice, the law condemns him to be silent for the rest of his life, but he who gives sound advice is exempted from paying taxes or contributions.

The second class consists of the husbandmen who form the bulk of the population, and are in disposition most mild and gentle. They are exempted from military service and cultivate the land undisturbed by fear. They never go to town, either take part in its tumults, or for any other purpose.

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1. Ancients India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian (A translation of the fragments of the Indika of Megasthenes collected by Dr. Schwanbeck and if the first part of the Indika of Arrian), by J.W.McCrindle, Trubner & Co, London, 1877. Frag XLII, page 103-104.
2. Ibid Frag XXXIII, page 83-86.

The third class consists of herdsmen and hunters who alone are allowed to hunt and to keep cattle. The fourth class consists of those who work at trades, of those who vend wares, and those who are employed in bodily labor. The fifth class consists of fighting men. The sixth class consists of the overseers, to whom is assigned the duty of watching all that goes on, and making reports secretly to the king. The seventh class consists of the councilors and assessors of the king. To them belong the highest posts of the government, the tribunals of justice, and the general administration of public affairs.

No one is allowed to marry out of his class or exchange one profession or trade for another, or follow more than one business. However, an exception is made in favor of the philosopher who for his virtue is allowed this privilege. The division of the society into seven classes is also recorded by Arrian[1].

Megasthenes makes a distinction in the philosophers[2]. He makes a division of the philosophers saying that they are two kinds - one he calls the Brachmanes and the other the Sarmanes. He states,

> *The Brachmanes are best esteemed for they are more consistent in their opinions. They live in a simple style and lie on beds with rushes or skins. They abstain from animal food and sexual pleasures and spend their time in listening to serious discourse and in imparting their knowledge to such as will listen to them. Though after living in this manner for 37 years, they return to regular life of ease, eat flesh, marry many wives and have children.*

The Sarmanes live in the woods, where they subsist on leaves of trees and wild fruits, and wear garments made from the bark of trees. They abstain from sexual intercourse and from wine. The Sarmanes knew no God[3], and Buddhist and Jains who are agnostics, are classified in this group.

Megasthenes makes a further distinction[4] amongst the Brachmanes.

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1. Ancients India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian (A translation of the fragments of the Indika of Megasthenes collected by Dr. Schwanbeck and if the first part of the Indika of Arrian), by J.W.McCrindle, Trubner & Co, London, 1877, page 208-212.
2. Ibid Frag XLI, page 97-103.
3. Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, Ramachandra Jain, 1972. page xxiii
4. Ibid Frag LIV, page 120-122.

In one instance he states that among the Brachmanes in India a sect of philosophers who adopt an independent life, and abstain from animal food and all victuals cooked by fire, being content to subsist upon fruits, which they do not gather from the trees, but pick up when they have dropped to the ground, and their drink is the water of the river Tagabena (probably the Tungabahadra, a large affluent of the Krishna). Throughout life they go about naked, saying that the body has been given by the Deity as a covering for the soul. They hold that God is light, but not such light as we see with the eye, not such as the sun or fire, but God is with them the WORD, by which term they do not mean articulate speech, but the discourse of reason, whereby the hidden mysteries of knowledge are discerned by the wise. They maintain that all men are held in bondage, like prisoners of war, to their own innate enemies, the sensual appetites, gluttony, anger, joy, grief, longing desire, and such like, while it is only the man who has triumphed over these enemies goes to God.

Hence in ancient India, prior to the Christian era, there were two types of philosophers - Brachmanes and Sarmanes, also called in literature as Brahmanas and Sramanas, who were theists and agnostics respectively. Also amongst the Brahmanas, there were some who lived an austere life while others though living an austere life for a while, transitioned to regular family life with comforts.

Hence in ancient India, prior to the Christian era, there were two types of philosophers - Brachmanes and Sarmanes, also called in literature as Brahmanas and Samanas, who were theists and agnostics respectively. Buddha is often referred to as samana Gautama. Also amongst the Brahmanas, there were some who lived an austere life while others though living an austere life for a while, transitioned to regular family life with comforts.

Many scholars link the Brahmanes (or Brahmanas) with the Vedic ancestors of the modern day Brahmins and the Tevijja Sutta is typically quoted as evidence. However, With the above evidence in the background, lets investigate the Tevijja Sutta. First in verse 2 we see that these Brahmanas were wealthy.

> *Now at that time many very distinguished and wealthy Brahmans were staying at Manasakata; to wit, Kanki the Brahman, Tarukkha the Brahman, Pokkharasadi the Brahman, Janussoni the Brahman, Todeyya the Brahman, and other very distinguished and wealthy Brahmans.*

Then we see in verse 10 that these Brahmanas taught various paths of salvation to Brahman

'Concerning the true path and the false, Gotama. Various Brahmans, Gotama, teach various paths. The Addhariya Brahmans, the Tittiriya Brahmans, the Chandoka Brahmans [the Chandava Brahmans], the Bavharija Brahmans. Are all those saving paths? Are they all paths which will lead him, who acts according to them, into a state of union with Brahma?

'Just, Gotama, as near a village or a town there are many and various paths, yet they all meet together in the village -- just in that way are all the various paths taught by various Brahmans -- the Addhariya Brahmans, the Tittiriya Brahmans, the Chandoka, Brahmans, the Bavharija Brahmans. Are all these saving paths? Are they all paths which will lead him, who acts according to them, into a state of union with Brahma?'

Brahman is defined by the Brahma Sutras (1.1.2) as the Omniscient, Omnipotent, all merciful Being from whom proceed the origin of all things. To a Brahmana, Brahman is God.

Regarding the three Vedas, there is nothing in the Tevijja Sutta to indicate that it refers to the Rig, Yajur and Sama, rather the opposite seems apparent. On the contrary in verse 25 of the the Tevijja Sutta Buddha clearly states that calling on Indra, Soma and Varuna are non-Brahmanic qualities.

'In just the same way, Vasettha, do the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, -- omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahman, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmans -- say thus: "Indra we call upon, Soma we call upon, Varuna we call upon, Isana we call upon, Pajapati we call upon, Brahma we call upon!" Verily, Vasettha, that those Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, but omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahman, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmans -- that they, by reason of their invoking and praying and hoping and praising, should, after death and when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahma verily such a condition of things can in no wise be!'

Also as indicated earlier, the Jewish scriptures familiar worldwide are certainly a possiblity as the three Vedas. Also from verse 25, we can conclude that the Rig Vedic practices were in existence, however, these

were considered evil and Buddha praises in verse 81 those Brahmanas who live an austere life throughout their lives

> *'Then you say, Vasettha, that the Bhikkhu is free from household and worldly cares, and that Brahma is free from household and worldly cares. Is therethen agreement and likeness between the Bhikkhu and Brahma?'*
>
> *'There is, Gotama!*
>
> *Very good, Vasettha. Then in sooth, Vasettha, that the Bhikkhu who is free from household cares should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahma, who is the same -- such a condition of things is every way possible!*
>
> *'And so you say, Vasettha, that the Bhikkhu is free from anger, and free from malice, pure in mind, and master of himself; and that Brahma is free from anger, and free from malice, pure in mind, and master of himself. Then in sooth, Vasettha, that the Bhikkhu who is free from anger, free from malice, pure in mind, and master of himself should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahma, who is the same-such a condition of things is every way possible!'*

The word Bhikku means disciple. Hence what we see here are the Brahmanas as described by Megasthenes and these are distinct from those following the Rig Vedic ways, which is considered non-Brahmanic.

Unfortunately, translating Brahmanas as presently day Brahmins seems to be a common problem today amongst some scholars. A scholar named John Richards (on the web) has translated the Dhammapada, verse 388 as

> *A brahmin is called so by breaking with evil deeds. It is by pious behaviour that a man is called a man of religion, and by casting out blemishes one is called one gone forth.*

However, another web site correctly translates the same verse as

> *Because he has discarded evil, he is called a Brahmana; because he lives in peace, he is called a Samana; because he gives up the impurities, he is called a Pabbajita - recluse.*

Chapter 9

Religions and Worships of India in the Pre-Christian Era

While worship is universal, a religion requires literature, philosophy or theology.[1] A distinction between worship and religion is made on this basis. In the pre-Christian era there were two known worships,

- Dravidian worship
- Vedic worship

Ancient Dravidian worship is seen in the Indus Valley civilization. Much of it is not clearly understood and most lost significance over a period of time. However, the worship of the memorial stone is seen from the Indus Valley to the present day.

> *The memorial stone found in the Indus Valley worship is called Sivalinka. The term Sivalinka was coined in the later period (after 3rd c AD) but this worship is very ancient. In the term 'Sivalinka', Siva denotes God of love and linka is a Sanskrit word which means symbol.*[2]

In the Old Testament of the Bible, the memorial stone plays a prominent role though it was never worshipped except possibly in the ignorance of Jacob,

> *And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.*[3]

The Dravidian worship was polytheistic. The Sangam literature indicate the worship of a number of deities and sacrifice was a part of the ritual.[4]

Two religions existed in the pre-Christian era, they were Buddhism and Jainism. Buddhism[5,6] began with Sakyamuni the Buddha who was

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1. M. Deivanayagam and D. Devakala, **Christianity in Hinduism**, Dravidian Religion Trust, 1997, page 22.
2. Ibid, page 21.
3. Genesis 28:17-18
4. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Macropaedia Volume 9, page 355.
5. The Bampton Lectures for 1932, **'The Buddha and the Christ',** Burnett Hillman Streeter, Macmillan and Co., 1932
6. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition.

born five and half centuries before Christ. He was the eldest and only son of a ruling prince. He was heir to a throne - not perhaps an important one, but still a throne. He had tasted the cup which only those can drink who are born to, or who early achieve wealth, rank, and opportunity beyond their fellows. He had tasted also the fruits of the intellectual life. He came of a race which more than any other, the Greeks not excepted, reveled in philosophical discussion; and though later he came to depreciate the value of metaphysical speculation, he was, it would seem adept in that art.

Tradition records that his actual decision to leave all, in order to seek some remedy for human ills, was precipitated by the sight, first of a man worn out by age, then of another broken by disease, followed by the spectacle of a beggar's decaying corpse. It was the realization of the suffering of other men that spurred him to action and renunciation.

A thing which almost held, 'the bond most difficult to break', was affection for his new-born son. His resolve to break this bond and leave home forever did not entail any material hardship to his wife and child.

For six years after his flight from home he strove to find the secret of escape from the misery and futility of life. First he sought it by the way of philosophic inquiry. When this failed, he tried the way of self-torturing asceticism recommended by the idealist teachers of his day. This failed also. Then, after an interval of absolute despair, one day as in intense meditation he sat under the Bo-tree, there came the Great Illumination. He saw in a flash the secret of existence. He grasped the cause of all life's misery; and with knowledge of the cause went understanding of the one sure way of complete deliverance. At that moment he became a Buddha, that is, one who has attained complete enlightenment.

> *When this knowledge had arisen within me, my heart and mind were freed from the drug of lust, from the drug of rebirth, from the drug of ignorance. In me, thus freed, arose knowledge and freedom, and I knew that rebirth was at an end, and that the goal had been reached.*

The secret of the Universe realized by Buddha was stated in what he called the Four Noble Truths. Of these the first three are to some extent theoretical, the fourth is practical.

The Noble Truth of Suffering:

> *Birth is suffering; death is suffering; presence of the hated is suffering; age is suffering; sickness is suffering; absence of the*

loved is suffering; to wish and not to get is suffering; briefly, the fivefold nature by which beings cling to existence is suffering.

The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering:
Desire (lit. thirst) is the cause; it leads from birth to birth, bringing with it delight and longing, seeking its gratification here and there - namely, desire for sensual pleasure, desire for existence, desire for prosperity.

The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering:
Suffering ceases with the cessation of this desire - a cessation consisting in the absence of every passion - with the abandoning of desire, with the doing away with it, with deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.

The fourth of the Noble Truths, that 'of the Path which leads to the Cessation of Suffering', is practical and ethical. It is known as the Holy Eightfold Path, and consists in:
Right belief, right feeling, right speech, right action, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right recollectedness, right meditation.

What he was concerned to stress was the futility of sacrifice, ceremony, and prayer. The gods themselves like men, are subject to the wheel of Karma and rebirth, and are impotent to give mankind the only help that can be of any profit. Knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, persistence along the eightfold Noble Path was the only way to deliverance, and, one who has reached deliverance along this road, and has become a Buddha, stands higher than the highest of the gods. He is, as they are not, freed from the tyranny of desire and the necessity of rebirth; he has achieved Nirvana.

And what is Nirvana? Is it extinction, or is it identity with the Absolute? On this point Buddhist sects give varying answers and modern experts disagree. Sakyamuni himself declined to say - perhaps because he depreciated speculation on the matter, perhaps because it seemed futile to attempt to express the inexpressible. However, to him the supreme problem was the problem of pain.

In history we can see that Buddhism split into two divisions, Hinayana and Mahayana. Hinayana which was propagated by Buddha, was an agnostic religion with no God, while Mahayana evolved with the concept of a divine savior. The Kushan king Kanishka (~1st c A.D.) supported Buddhism, and during during his reign a new form of Mahayana Buddhism

with the compassionate saints (bodhisattvas) helping to save others spread in the North. The Kushan Empire was adjacent to the Pahlava Empire where Christianity was introduced by the Apostle Thomas. Mahayana Buddhism seems a syncretism between Hinayana Buddhism and Christianity.

The Hinayana scriptures are in Pali, while the Mahayana writings developed in the Kushan Dynasty are in Sanskrit. This is significant since the the Kushans had adopted the local Bactrian language for their kingdom and took it all around their area of influence, including Northern India. The usage of Sanskrit instead of Bactrian is logically explained by the fact that Sanskrit and Christianity developed in the adjacent kingdom of the Pahlava-Saka Empire, and, influence and discussion gave rise to the development of Mahayana Buddhism and writings in Sanskrit. Hence, we can conclude that Mahayana Buddhism developed in the Christian era, since the first evidence of Sanskrit is seen in the Pahlava-Saka Empire in 150 A.D.

Jainism[1] was also an agnostic religion and its history began in the 6th century BC with Vardhamana, who is known as Mahavira ("Great Hero"). Mahavira was the 24th and last Tirthankara (literally, "Ford-maker") of the current age (kalpa) of the world. (Tirthankaras, also called Jinas, are revealers of the Jaina religious path [dharma] who have crossed over life's stream of rebirths and have set the example that all Jainas must follow.) Mahavira was a contemporary of Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) and was born in the same area, the lower Gangetic Plain.

Mahavira, like the Buddha, was the son of a chieftain of the ruling class. At age 30 he renounced his princely status to take up the ascetic life. It is likely that he pursued the discipline of a pre-established ascetic tradition and had a reforming influence on it. His acknowledged status as the 24th Tirthankara (or Jina) means that Jainas perceive him as the last revealer in this cosmic age of the Jaina dharma.

The community appears to have grown quickly—Jaina tradition states that it numbered 14,000 monks and 36,000 nuns at the time of Mahavira's death. From the beginning the community was subject to a number of schismatic movements. Jamali, Mahavira's son-in-law, led the first of seven schisms that occurred during the Jina's lifetime. None of these had a significant effect on the Jaina community. The only schism to have a

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition.

lasting effect was that between the Svetambaras (Sanskrit literally, "White-robed") and the Digambaras (Sanskrit "Sky-clad"; i.e., naked); this division still exists.

Svetambara Jainism (Sanskrit: "White-robed," or "White-clad"), one of the two principal sects of Jainism, a religion of India. The monks and nuns of the Shvetambara sect wear simple white garments. This is in contrast to the practice followed by the parallel sect, the Digambara, which does not admit women into the ascetic order and whose monks are always nude. The major points of difference between the two concern the question of proper monastic attire and whether or not a soul can attain liberation from a female body (a possibility the Digambaras deny).

The schism that gave rise to the two sects is traditionally said to have taken place following a migration of Jaina monks southward from the Ganges River or from Ujjain to Karnataka during a serious famine in the reign of Candragupta Maurya. Bhadrabahu, the leader of the emigrants, insisted on the observance of nudity, thus following the example set by Mahavira, the last of the Jaina saviours. Sthulabhadra, the leader of the monks who remained behind in the north, allowed the wearing of white garments, possibly as a concession to the hardships and confusion caused by the famine.

The philosophical doctrines of the two groups never significantly differed, and their members have continued to intermarry. Since the northern and southern branches lived at a distance from one another, however, variations in their ritual, mythology, and literature did arise. The most serious issue, the question of whether it was possible for a monk who owned property (e.g., wore clothes) to achieve moksha (spiritual release), led to the division into two sects in AD 80 (according to the Shvetambaras, AD 83). In the 1st c. A.D., we see major changes in the religions and worships of India and this is discussed in the next section.

The Jaina's religious goal is the complete perfection and purification of the soul. This can occur only when the soul is in a state of eternal liberation from and non-attachment to corporeal (material) bodies. Liberation of the soul is impeded by the accumulation of karmans, bits of material, generated by a person's actions, that bind themselves to the soul and consequently bind the soul to material bodies through many births; this has the effect of thwarting the full self-realization and freedom of the soul. Many monks starved themselves to death, following the example of Mahavira himself.

Jaina Canon, the sacred texts of Jainism, a religion of India, whose authenticity is disputed between sects. The Svetambara canon consists principally of 45 works divided as follows: (1) 11 A ngas, the main texts — a 12th has been lost for at least 14 centuries; (2) 12 Upangas, or subsidiary texts; (3) 10 Prakirnakas, or assorted texts; (4) 6 Cheda-sutras on the rules of ascetic life; (5) 2 Culika-sutras on cognition and epistemology; and (6) 4 Mula-sutras on miscellaneous topics. Svetambara, however, originally accepted a canon of 71 works said to derive from a 5th-century religious Council of Valabhi.

The Svetambara works cover a variety of topics, including a list of the Tirthankaras, or Jinas (Jaina saviours), exploits and teachings of these figures, and doctrines. Some of the A ngas contain supposed dialogues between Mahavira, the most recent Tirthankara, and his followers. Others are said to retain some of the earliest parts of the canon, which appears to have been preserved originally in oral form. The canon is written in the Prakrit dialect (stabilized literary dialect called Ardhamagadhi, Semi-Magadhi, Magadhi being the dialect of the ancient kingdom of Magadha, in present day Bihar), though from the Gupta period (4th-6th century AD) Jaina writers have used Sanskrit for a wider audience.

The Digambara sect disputes the authenticity of the entire Svetambara canon. The Digambara believe that the original is lost but that the substance of Jaina doctrine has been preserved in a variety of religious and philosophic texts written by various leaders and scholars of the Jaina community over the centuries. Jainism was an agnostic religion. History reveals that many Jains converted into Saivism.

Of all the religions and worships before Christ, we find that Buddhism was the dominant religion followed by masses and vegetarianism was the norm under it's influence (vedic religion was non-vegetarian). It was an ethical religion with strong compassion for all creation. However, there was no room for God in this religion and modern day scholars indicate that the heart of man was empty and hungry for God. When we transition into the 1st c AD, we see a drastic change in the religion and worship of India.

Chapter 10

Religions and Worships of India in the Post-Christian Era

In its section on the history of the Indian Subcontinent, the Encyclopedia Britannica (1982 edition) describes major changes in the religions of India. For instance the Vedic religion underwent changes with the gradual fading out of some of the Vedic deities, and further they state that,

> *"The two major gods were Visnu and Siva, around whom there emerged a monotheistic trend perhaps best expressed in the Bhagavad Gita . . ."*
>
> *"Sacrificial ritual was beginning to be replaced by the practice of bhakti (personal devotion), positing a personal relationship between the individual and the deity"*

Thus we see a new religion arise based on a monotheistic doctrine, and God who is first called Isa.

> *"The cult of Siva or Saivism emerged first, and the Vishnu-Krishna cult or Vaishnavism came afterwards as an imitation or duplication. The earlier appearance of Siva is indicated in the first instance by the fact that it is he alone who is called Isa or Isvara."*[1]

and

> *"This peculiar character of the cult makes it permissible to infer that Siva was probably the first and only god of the monotheistic Hinduism which replaced Vedic polytheism as the highest expression of the religious sentiment of the Hindus. That is to say, originally the monotheism was unitary. In fact, even in recent times the Saivas of the south maintained that Siva was the only supreme deity."* [2]

This monotheistic faith supplanted[3] the Vedic deities Mitra, Varuna, Indra & Agni.

Romila Thapar in her book "A History of India," (Volume 1, pages 131-134) writes,

> *[About the beginning of the Christian era] "Another*

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1. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **Hinduism**, OUP, 1979, page 89.
2. Ibid, page 241.
3. Ibid, page 88.

characteristic of Hinduism was a gradual shift in emphasis from ritual alone to the view that a completely personal relationship between God and the devotee was possible. The monotheistic concept of God, with either Vishnu or Shiva as its manifestation, was gaining strength. The relationship was one where God could bestow his grace (prasada) on the devotee, and the degree of devotion (bhakti) varied from person to person. This idea of personal devotion or bhakti, as it was commonly called, was to become the dynamic force of later Hinduism. The change in the theological attitude is perhaps best expressed in the philosophy of the Gita."

"Vishnu assumes various forms or incarnations and enters the world of men in order to save them from evil. The tenth and final incarnation has yet to come, and on this occasion he will come in the form of Kalkin riding a white horse, which suggests a connection with the idea of the Messiah and the coming of the Maitreya Buddha in Mahayana Buddhism."

Man need not offer sacrifices any more since God himself had offered himself as sacrifice, and salvation could be obtained by faith. How did this religion arise, since there was nothing in India before Christ to catalyze it? The Dravidian worship was idolatrous and polytheistic, while the Vedic worship exalted nature and was also polytheistic. The two religions, Buddhism and Jainism were politely termed agnostic with no room for God. The only logical answer to the development of this new religion is Christianity in India by the apostles of Christ since India had excellent trade relations with the Roman Empire both in the North and in the South..

Many Roman coins were found in Kerala and the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu, which served as main resources of foreign trade. But most of these coins belong to the early period of Christian era (i.e.) 1-2 CAD. Roman coins were also found at one or two places in Tamil Nadu but meagre in number. Places like Alagankulam, Kulathupalayam, Mamallapuram had yielded Roman Coins of 4 CAD. Large amount of coins were collected from Madurai and Karur. They were all of copper. For the first time gold coins of 5 CAD has been found at Tamil Nadu. Scholars opined that Roman trade with Tamil Nadu almost ceased in the 2 or 3 CAD. But these new finds of gold coins had proved that the trade continued upto 5 CAD. Similar type of coins of King Theodosius II and Leo I were already unearthed in Akkiyalur

hoard in Karnataka.[1]

Romila Thapar[2] writes,
"The most profitable overseas trade was the Roman trade with South India. Yavana merchants (i.e. merchants from western Asia and the Mediterranean) had trading establishments both in the Satavahana kingdoms and in those of the far south. Early Tamil literature describes Yavana ships arriving with their cargoes at the city of Kaveripattinam. The Periplus Maris Erythreae, a maritime geography of the east-west trade, written in about the first century AD, gives details of the commodities carried and the routes taken by traders and ships. The route for trade then proceeds round the tip of the peninsula and up the coast, where of all the ports mentioned there we have now fairly detailed knowledge of one—Arikamedu (known to the Periplus as Padouke), where extensive excavations in 1945 uncovered a sizeable Roman settlement which was a trading station, it would seem that the Romans were using Arikamedu from the first century BC to the early second century AD. The frequency of hoards of Roman coins found in the Deccan and south India indicate the volume of this trade. Most of the urban centers of the south were ports which prospered on this trade, such as Kaverippattinam" (pg 114 – 115).
"Although the economic impact of the Roman trade was more evident in southern India, the impact of Romano-Greek ideas and artifacts was more evident in the north. Exchange of merchandise led inevitably to an exchange of ideas." (pg 118)

Regarding the tradition of the Apostle Thomas, Bivar[3] writes,
"The date of Gondophares is firmly established by the Takht-i Bahi inscription of the year 103, which is also dated to the twenty-sixth year of Gondophares' reign. The first date must be reckoned according to the "era of Azes" (57 B.C.) and therfore corresponds to 46 A.D., while the accession year of Gondophares is consequently 20 A.D...... Tradition records that Thomas set out

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1. The Hindu, **Date of Roman coins found near Srivilliputhur assessed**, June 20 1998.
2. Romila Thapar, **History of India (Volume I)**, New Delhi, Penguin Books India (P) Ltd., 1966.
3. A.D.H. Bivar, **The Cambridge History of Iran**, Vol 3 (1), Edited by Ehsan Yarshater, Cambridge University Press, 1983, page 197.

for India immediately after the Crucifixion, i.e. in April 30 A.D. The appearance of Gondophares in the Acts of Thomas is therefore chronologically acceptable."

When there are trade relations, cultural and religious exchanges also take place. The Bhagavad Gita (Sanskrit: "Song of God"), is one of the greatest and most beautiful of the Hindu scriptures. It forms part of Book VI of the Indian epic the Mahabharata ("Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty") and is written in the form of a dialogue between the warrior Prince Arjuna and his friend and charioteer, Krishna, who is also an earthly incarnation of the god Vishnu. The poem consists of 700 Sanskrit verses divided into 18 chapters.

The dialogue takes place on the field of battle, just as the Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas is about to begin. The two armies stand opposing each other, and, on seeing many of his friends and kinsmen among those lined up on the other side, Prince Arjuna hesitates. He considers whether it would not be better to throw down his arms and allow himself to be slain by the enemy rather than to engage in a just, but cruel, war. He is recalled to his sense of duty as a warrior by Krishna, who points out to him that the higher way is the dispassionate discharge of his duty, performed with faith in God, and without selfish concern for personal triumph or gain.

The Bhagavad-Gita goes far beyond the ethical question with which it begins to consider broadly the nature of God and the means by which man can know him. The greatness of the writing lies in its description of both the end and the means. It gives a synopsis of the religious thought and experience of India through the ages. It is a predominantly theistic work, with God identified with Krishna.

The avatar concept (God coming into the world in the form of a man) in Vaishnavism is the influence of Christianity. The various avatars are later additions. For example, the various versions of the **Ramayana** identify Rama with Vishnu as another incarnation. However, this is not so in its oldest form written by Valmiki. The next version was Kambar's Ramayana in Tamil where Rama is made an incarnation. After this other versions in various languages were written with Rama as an incarnation.

In BG VIII:4, Krishna states,

The basis of all created things is the mutable nature: the basis of the divine elements is the cosmic spirit. And the basis of all

sacrifices, here in the body is Myself, O Best of embodied beings (Arjuna)

In BG X:3, Krishna states,
He who knows Me, the unborn, without Beginning also the mighty lord of the worlds, he, among mortals is undeluded and freed from all sins.

And in X:8 Krishna states,
I am the origin of all; from Me all (the whole creation) proceeds. Knowing this, the wise worship Me, endowed with conviction.

Scholars have pointed out many other similar doctrines such as God indwelling man, Trinity, etc. For example Y. Masih in his book titled, "Shankara's Universal Philosophy of Religion" writes about the striking similarity between the lives of Krishna and Jesus,

The phenomenon of 'Krsnajanmastame' in which the child Krishna is represented as a suckling at the mother's breast. Nanda, the foster-father of Krishna had gone to Mathura to pay his taxes (just as Joseph had gone to Bethlehem for census). Krishna was born in a cow-shed (Gokula exactly as Jesus was born in a manger); massacre of infants of Mathura by Kamsa (just as was the massacre of infants by Herod); Krishna (like Jesus) had raised the son of a window from the dead; Kubja anointed Krishna just as Mary had done with precious ointment.

Some time ago I was speaking to a Brahmin who was a teacher of the Bhagavad Gita. He discussed the similarities between the two faiths with respect to the Gita. He pointed out the parallels in the doctrines of sacrifice, salvation by faith, and total surrender to God. However he quietly went on to say that the Gita was written several hundred years before Christ and probably even Christ might have read the Gita!

God says in His Word that He gives us weapons to demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Nirad Chaudhuri in his book on Hinduism points out that 'the Gita is written in good classical Sanskrit, and epigraphic evidence clearly shows that the Gita could not have been written before the second century A.D.'

The earliest epigraphic[1] evidence on languages employed in India

1. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **Hinduism**, OUP, 1979, page 37-39.

comes from the inscriptions of Asoka inscribed in third century B.C. Asoka took care that his messages were intelligible to all and he used a particular kind of Prakrit. He even translated his messages to Greek and Aramaic. But, there are no inscriptions in Sanskrit. The first evidence of Sanskrit is seen around A.D.150 and from the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions. Nirad Chaudhuri points out that the Hindu religious texts with the exception of the Vedas and their ancillary treatises, are all in classical Sanskrit. He states that in their present form none would be earlier than the fourth century A.D. The Vedas seem to be written in what he calls archaic Sanskrit , but the X mandala of the Rgveda is written later. It is in the X mandala that we see the divine and human aspects of the Prajapati and His sacrifice of himself for us.

I pointed this out to my Brahmin friend and concluded that the doctrines of God coming into the world in the form of a man, He being our sacrifice, salvation by faith in Him, and our response of total surrender to God as a living sacrifice are the doctrines of Christ and these have influenced the writer of the Bhagavad Gita.

When we take early Indian writings like the Bhagavad Gita, such could not have been written without Christian influence with the avatar concept borrowed from Christianity. However, as we follow early Indian Christianity with time, syncretism started infiltrating the religion from the surrounding influences. Just as Christianity in Europe was corrupted, Christianity in India suffered the same fate. When God's children go into idolatry, it always leads to bondage, and this principle is seen in the nation of Israel. In India, the idolatry of His people led to the bondage and slavery of the Caste system. Today what is seen in Hinduism[1] are the Six-fold religions based on Siva worship and are linked through the names of the family relationship of Siva. The six-fold religion developed under the influence of Christianity. Siva's roots are from Isa, but the religion evolved by syncretism. In the 8th c A.D, Adi Sankara amalgamated the Six-fold religions, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktham, Gaumaram, Ganapathyam and Sauram, by using monism and the cycle of birth. His efforts resulted in the caste system and his motive was to pave the way for the supremacy of the Vedic Purohitas under the guise of religion.

1. Dr. M. Deivanayagam, **108 Questions to Sankara Mutt**, The Revival Movement of Dravidian Religion, Chennai, India.

Chapter 11

Salvation in Hinduism

The Gospel of Christ entered northern India in the 1st c AD through the apostle Thomas and spread in the Pahlava Empire of Gondophares and the Sakas who were under their dominion. The apostle's ministry ended in the south where he died a martyr in Mylapore. South India also had excellent trade relations with the Roman Empire, and when there are trade relations, cultural and religions exchanges also take place. The Christian Gospel is seen in the Krishna concept which evolved in the north, while the Siva concept evolved in the south. Around the 5th c AD, through the southern incursions of the Gupta Empire, these two Christian developments came in contact with each other. The communications in the north were in Sanskrit while it was Tamil in the south. At this juncture, the Dravidians in the south developed Grantha a southern script, for communicating in Sanskrit.

From the 7th century AD onward, a movement with religious origins made itself heard in South Indian literature. The movement was that of bhakti, or intense personal devotion to the two principal gods of Hinduism, Siva and Vishnu. The earliest bhakti poets were the followers of Siva, the Nayanars (Siva Devotees), whose first representative was the poetess Karaikkal Ammaiyar, who called himself a pey, or ghostly minion of Siva, and sang ecstatically of his dances. Tirumular was a mystic and reformer in the so-called Siddhanta (Perfected Man) school of Saivism, which rejected caste and asceticism, and believed that the body is the true temple of Siva. There were 12 early Nayanar saints. Similar poets, in the tradition of devotion to the god Vishnu, also belonged to this early period. Called Alvars (Immersed Ones), they had as their first representatives Poykai, Putan, and Peyar, who composed "centuries" (groups of 100) of linked verses (antati), in which the final line of a verse is the beginning line of the next and the final line of the last verse is the beginning of the first, so that a "garland" is formed. To these Alvars, God is the light of lights, lit in the heart.[1]

The most important Nayanars were Appar and Campantar, in the 7th century, and Cuntarar, in the 8th. Appar, a self-mortifying Jain ascetic before he became a Saiva saint, sings of his conversion to a religion of

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1. Background on the Bhakti songs extracted from the **Encyclopaedia Britannica**, 1982.

love, surprised by the Lord stealing into his heart. After him, the term tevaram ("private worship") came to mean "hymn". Campantar, too, wrote these personal, "bonemelting" songs for the common man. Cuntarar, however, who sees a vision of 63 Tamil saints-rich, poor, male, female, of every caste and trade, unified even with bird and beast in the love of God-epitomizes bhakti. To him and other Bhaktas, every act is worship, every word God's name. Unlike the ascetics, they return man to the world of men, bringing hope, joy, and beauty into religion and making worship an act of music. Their songs have become part of temple ritual.

In the 9th century, Manikkavacakar, in his great, moving collection of hymns in Tiruvacakam, sees Siva as lover, lord, master, and guru; the poet sings richly and intimately of all sensory joys merging in God. Minister and scholar, he had a child's love for God.

Antal (8th century), a Vaisnava poetess, is literally love-sick for Krsna. Periyalvar, her father, sings of Krsna in the aspect of a divine child, originating a new genre of celebrant poetry. Kulacekarar, a Cera prince, sings of both Rama and Krsna, identifying himself with several roles in the holy legends: a gopi in love with Krsna or his mother, Devaki, who misses nursing him, or the exiled Rama's father, Dasaratha. Tiruppanalvar, an untouchable poet (panan), sang 10 songs about the god in Srirangam, his eyes, mouth, chest, navel, his clothes, and feet. To these Bhaktas, God is not only love but beauty. His creation is his jewel; in separation he longs for union, as man longs for him. Tirumankaiyalvar, religious philosopher, probably guru (personal religious teacher and spiritual guide in Hinduism) to the Pallava kings, and poet of more than 1,000 verses, was apparently responsible for the building of many Vaisnava temples. The last of Alvars, Nammalvar (Our Alvar), writing in the 9th century, expresses poignantly both the pain and ecstasy of being in love with God, revivifying mythology into revelation.

Vaishnavism[1] explains that God was born so He could deliver us from our sinful nature and give us a new life. This is being sung as follows:

"Poinninra gnanamum pollaa olukkum alukkudambhum
inninra neermai ini yaam vuraamai vuyir alippaan
ienninra yoniumaai iranthaai imaiyore thalaivaa"

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1. Research on the Tamil Bhakti songs is extracted from the article, 'Dravidian Worship and the Doctrine of Avatar' by Dr. Devakala in the **Dravida Samayam** newsletter dated March 1998 .

(God was born from a noble woman in order to give us a new life so that deceptive knowledge, immorality and unclean body would not possess us)

(Numalvar Thiruviruthum 1 - 3580)

The purpose of the avatar of God is explained in Saivism as follows:

"Iravaa inbaththu yemai iruththa vendip
piravaa muthalvan piranthaan"
(The unborn prime God was born to give us eternal pleasure.)

(Poatrip Pakorodai 69)

If it is said that God became an avatar so that man can be liberated from the bondage of sin to acquire eternal happiness.

Then, when did man fall into sin?

Sivagnanapotham, the theological foundation for Saivism says as follows,

"Avan aval athu yenum avai moovinaimayin
thotria thithiye odungi malaththulathaam
antham aathi yenmanaar pulavar"
(In the beginning God created man (avan-first man), woman (aval-first woman) and the world (athu) in three different actions and they were holy. But, later on they fell into the sin or malam, which ended the life of holiness and was the beginning of sin say the scholars.)

(Sivagnanapotham - 1)

How did creation which was holy, fall into the sin? Saiva Siddhanta explains it as follows,

"Muththi mutharkodikkae mogak kodi padarnthu
aththi paluththathu yenru vunthee para
appalham vunnaathae vunthee para"
(Amongst the creatures which were holy, on the first creeper (first man), the creeper of sin crept over it and bore the fruit of evil. Speak this forth. Do not partake of that fruit. Speak this forth.)

(Thiruvuntiyar 41)

When did this happen?

The Bible tells us that it occurred after the first man Adam ate the fruit that he was forbidden to eat. Adam was given the commandment not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but when he disobeyed God, sin took dominion over him says the Bible. Thus all the people who are the descendants of him, the first man, have fallen into sin since the first man disobeyed God's commandment. Hence the sinful nature which continuously passes through the generations, is known as '***Sahasa Mala***' in Saivism, and '***Janmabhandh***' in Vaishnavism.

God alone is holy without sin. Saivism and Vaishnavism accept that all the people are born with a sinful nature. But Advaitists, whose doctrines are totally contrary to the doctrine of God, say that the concept of sin is 'maya' or illusion. Then each one can claim that 'I am God' and become equal with God. Thus they have devised a doctrine which is totally contrary to God.

Who can liberate man who is born with a sinful nature? Are human efforts sufficient to liberate himself or does God need to intervene? God alone can liberate him since man himself is sinful by nature. It is explained in Saiva Siddhanta by the following illustration. If we want to make copper free from rust, gold, which is never affected by rust, should be melted together with it and mixed. Thereafter it will not be affected by rust. Likewise, God alone who is holy can liberate human beings that have a sinful nature by birth. In order to redeem man from sin and show him the path, God became a man with five senses.

This is explained in Vaishnavism as follows.
'Pavam aruppaar'
(God who takes away our sin)

(Sadagopar Anthaathi – 8)

"Avan kandaai nannenjae aararulum kedum
avan kandaai aimpulanaai ninraan avan kandaai..."
(You with a pure heart, know him who is with five senses, and who is having grace, and who is the destroyer of sin)

(Nalaryira Divya Prabhandam-
Eyarpa erandam Thiruvanthaathi-(24)-3307)

The above mentioned songs show that God became a man with five senses and destroyed the power of sin over us. Thus, God became a man

with five senses - a Guru and observed the penance of the suffering of death in order to redeem man. It is explained in Saivism as follows,

"Aimpula vaedarin ayarnthanai valarnthena
thammuthal guruvumoi dhavaththinil vunarththa vittu
anniyam inmaiyin aran kalhal selumae"
(God who came into this world as a Guru on seeing the souls who are living in worldly pleasure by enjoying the pleasures of the five senses, made them to feel through his penance of suffering of death that they have forgotten their creator and are living in sin. Once the soul is enlightened through his suffering, it repents of its sins, and the separation with God is removed and it reaches the feet of God)

(Sivagnanapotham - 8)

This is explained in Saiva Siddhanta by the following illustration. A son of a king was lost and he was living as a hunter with the hunters, and he did not know that he was the son of a king. One day, when the king came to know that his son was living as a hunter, he wanted to see him immediately. It occurred to him that if he were to go as a king his son might be afraid of him and run away. So, he disguised himself as a hunter and went to meet him and talked with him. He explained to his son that he was not a hunter but a son of a king and took him back to his palace.

Likewise, God took the form of a man to redeem mankind who were enslaved by the pleasures of this world and had forgotten their God. Also, he made them to realize who they are through his penance of the suffering of death. 'Penance' doesn't refer to the penance that is being observed by a hermit in a forest. Thiruvalluvar says that real penance is sacrificing ones own life for others.

'Thanuir thaanarap peruthal'

(Thirukurral 268)

Hence God is described in Saivism as

'Meydhavan kaan'
(Look at the one who has done true penance)

(Thirunavukkarasar 265-8)

'Perundhavaththu yem pingnagan kaan'
(Look at our Lord of great penance)

(Appar – Pa. A. 278 – 5)

The same concept is explained in Vaishnavism as follows.
‘Thaanae dhava vuruvum’
(He is the embodiment of penance)

(Nalaryira Divya Prabhandam-
Iyarpa mundram Thiruvanthaathi-38-4321)

‘Sinthanaiyai dhavaneriyai thirumaalai’
(He is our thought who is a path through his penance of sacrifice and is Thirumal)

(Periya Thirumolhi 6-3-7 (1404))

‘Pinakkara aruvagai samayamum neriyulli vuraiththa
kanakkaru nalaththan; anthamil aathiam pagavan
vanakkudai dhavaneri valininru’
(The consistent central theme revealed by the Six-fold religion is that our God is the one who is the source of all blessings and is the one who has neither beginning nor end, and is the one who showed the path through his great penance of suffering)

(Numalvar Thiruvaimolhi 1-3-5 (2108))

Hence, the God who accepted the penance of the suffering of death and offered himself as a sacrifice is being sung in the following Saivite songs.
‘Aviyumaagi’
(One who became the sacrifice)

(Appar 307-8)

‘Aviyaai aviyumaagi arukkamaai perukkamaagi
paaviyar paavam theerkum paramanoi Brahmanaagi’
(The supreme God became Brahma and he is the sacrifice and sacrificed himself in order to redeem sinners)

(Thirunavukkarasar Devaram – pa. a. 320)

The songs mentioned above explain that God became man and sacrificed himself in order to redeem the sinners.

Hence God sacrificed his five senses, he is known as

'Ainthaviththaan'
(One who sacrificed his five senses)

(Thirukkural – 25)

and this is explained in Thirukkural as follows:

"Pori vaayil ainthaviththaan poitheer olhukka
neri ninraar needu vaalhvaar"
(Those who follow the one, who sacrificed his five senses on an instrument and showed us the way and who is the life and truth, will have eternal life)

(Thirukkural – 6)

The term '**Ainthaviththaan**' can be seen only in two places in Thirukkural and it does not refer to a hermit who controls his five senses. Also this term is not seen in any song on sanyasins, but this term exclusively refers to God who sacrificed his five senses. Since it refers to God who took the form of a man it is seen in an invocation of God that is in the first and third chapters which is praising God the Father (Kadavul vaalhththu) and God the Son (Neeththaar perumai).

His feet look like a red flower since he shed his blood for the redemption of mankind. It is sung in Saiva Siddhanta as follows,

'Semmalar nonthaalh seral ottaa
ammalam kaliee anbar'
(His feet are like a red flower since he observed nonbu or sacrificed himself to redeem the people from their sins).

(Sivagnanapotham - 12)

Once the soul is cleansed from its sin through the sacrifice of God, it is freed from sin and it becomes a temple of God. This is sung as follows,

"Semmalar nonthaal seral ottaa
ammalam kaliee anbarodu mariyee
maalara neyam malinthavar vaedamum
aalayam thaanum aran yena tholumae"
(Once God cleanses a soul which is separated by sin from the feet of God which looks like a red flower because of its sacrifice (nonbu), it becomes one with God and it is freed from confusion and it overflows with love of God and it reaches the feet of God and become a temple of God.)

(Sivagnanapotham - 12)

Thirumular says
'*Ullam perungovil voon udambu aalayam'*
(Our soul is a great temple and also our body is a temple)

(Thirumular Thirumundiram 1792)

Vaishnavism denotes this as '***Shethram***' or '***Shethranggnan***'.

Bible tells us that 'You are the temple of God'. Since God wants everyone to live with His joy in our hearts, He took the form of a man, sacrificed himself on the cross and bestowed liberation and redemption to mankind.

The songs mentioned above belong to the post-Christian era. The theme of the songs mentioned above is that God became an avatar, and sacrificed himself in order to liberate mankind from the bondage of sin. In history Jesus Christ alone is mentioned as the only one who became an avatar and sacrificed himself. God became a man and sacrificed himself on the cross (through the penance of suffering of death) in order to redeem sinners, and earned salvation for them.

Thus, the influence of Christianity in Hindu thought is clearly seen., however, the fullness of the truth is seen only in Saiva Siddhanta where Meykandar's Siva Gnana Botham sets the standard for the truth. Many do not realize that the roots of Hindu Religion are in South India. Their founding saints - 63 Nayanmars of Saivism and 12 Alvars of Vaishnavism were all from the South and the evidence for early Indian Christianity has been buried all these years in Tamil Literature. However, the theistic faith of the Hindus was later corrupted by the atheistic philosophy of monism.

Chapter 12

Corruption to the Theistic Faith of the Hindus

The Webster's dictionary defines syncretism as the combination of different forms of beliefs or practice. From a very early date, the Christian church had to struggle with various interpretations of its faith which seemed to many to endanger a crucial aspect of that faith. Converts were coming to Christianity from several different religious and cultural backgrounds. As was to be expected, these various origins influenced their interpretation of Christianity.

At the same time other religious movements were taking important elements of the Christian faith and incorporating them into their systems. For example in the Pancaratra literature (around 5th c AD) we find five manifestations of God - para, vyüha, vibhava, arca and antaryämi. The para is the highest form of God in the highest heaven and this is similar to God the Father. Next in the vyüha and vibhava manifestations we have both the Incarnation and the deification of man. The avatar concept which is syncretised from the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ fits in these manifestations. In the arca manifestation God condescends to live in an idol and as antaryämi God resides in the hearts of His people.[1] In these manifestations we see the earlier idolatry and worship of men which was prevalent in India, syncretised with the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Was this sufficient to call them Christian? Where was the line to be drawn between true Christianity and what was in fact a different religious with Christian elements?

This problem faced the early Church since quite clearly, that line could not be drawn a priori, for those who were eventually considered heretics did not work outside the Christian community, but rather counted themselves as faithful Christians attempting to explain the gospel in terms that their contemporaries might understand. Also, those who were eventually declared orthodox did not agree on all matters, and therefore

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1. **Birth of Bhakti in Indian Religions and Art**, Susmita Pande, Books and Books, New Delhi, 1982.

a contemporary observer would have had great difficulty in distinguishing them claiming to be the correct understanding of Christianity.

The Church today is faced with the same problem, and most of the confusion arises since there is a lack of systematic understanding of the Bible. Scholars who decipher iconography (sculptures) will tell us that early Christianity in India was corrupted just as Christianity in Europe was corrupted by syncretism and idolatry. When God's children deviate from Him, it always leads to bondage. This principle is seen in the nation of Israel and never changes. In India, the deviation of His people from His ways led to the bondage and slavery of the Caste system.

Two key philosophies play a major role in corrupting the Christian faith. They are Monism and Cycle of Birth. Monism is an atheistic philosophy, and many are deceived thinking that it is a "scientific" justification for rejecting God and His authority as Creator. Monism leads to a series of beliefs about the past and future in explaining facts that are observable in the present. It is a religion since, "religion" can be defined as a concept or system of belief that is held to with ardor and faith. Thus ultimately monism is a religious view concerning life.

Similarly this is a faith of many who reject God. They lose hope in the present birth and believe that things will improve in their next one. The error of these philosophies is shown in the next two sections.

Monism

Monism teaches that there is only one kind of ultimate substance, and hence that there is no duality. The mind awake or dreaming moves though maya (illusion) and only nonduality is the final truth. In India, this philosophy historically began with the 7th-century thinker Gaudapada and it was further developed by Adi Sankara into a philosophy called Advaita after 8th c AD. Advaita claims that this truth is concealed by the ignorance of illusion. Advaita teaches that there is no becoming either of a thing by itself or out of some other thing. It teaches that there is no individual self or soul (jiva), only the atman (all-soul). Individuals may be temporarily delineated just as the space in a jar delineates a part of main space. When the jar is broken, the individual space becomes once more part of the main space.

Monism quite naturally leads to Pantheism, which teaches that all religious paths lead to the same ultimate end, since there is (according to

monism) only one ultimate reality and everything else is maya. This has led many to think that these paths are like rivers that finally lead to the same ocean. This is error since all paths are not the same, and, when two paths contradict each other, both cannot be right.

When God created the heaven and the earth, God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. God saw His creation and it was beautiful and not an illusion. Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Man was created in the image of God, but, was not God. The earth was in perfection as according to God's divine plan. However, Satan tempted man to disobey and rebel against God by saying that (Genesis 3:5)

Ye shall be as gods.

This seduction of Satan is fundamental to monists. Scholars indicate that Adi Sankara, who was influenced by this philosohpy interpreted an early Indian writing,

Aham Brahmasmi

This should be translated as, ***God is in me***, but, Adi Sankara interpretation led to translating it as ***I am God.*** Man's enslavement to Satan's enticement never change.

The major sects in Hinduism are Savism and Vaishnavism, and both of these are theistic religions developed under the influence of early Christianity in India. However, Advaita which is based on monism corrupted the theistic faith of the Hindus, and many are Advaitans not realizing that they have deviated from their theistic Hindu roots. The term Hinduism was coined by the British about two hundred years ago to classify all worships and religions in India that was not readily identifiable like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc.

When Adam and Eve sinned, evil entered God's kingdom on earth, dividing it again into two kingdoms, kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Thus dualism is a present reality, and the universe exists in a state of conflict or spiritual warfare. This is revealed by an ongoing conflict between God and His kingdom confronting Satan and his kingdom. This warfare is recognized and described by different people in various ways, some speak of the struggle between good and evil. Others talk of the battle between right and wrong, while others describe it as light against darkness.

In the future God will completely destroy Satan's kingdom, and Satan and his followers will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire in torment, which is God's judgment for them. Satan's greatest weapon to destroy people is ignorance, and monism is his tool to blind men and women to his existence and working.

Cycle of Birth

In classical times, men's ideas concerning ethics and morality centered on the concept of karma. This denoted the totality of actions, good or bad, which were able to affect the individual's future destiny. The belief in samsara or rebirth, provided the framework within which this idea was worked out in each instance. Good karma would ensure a favorable rebirth, and bad karma an unfavorable one. In rebirth, man could be born either as a human being or as an animal. Man perceived reality as two separate entities: jiva or living substance, and ajiva or non living substance. This applied to both men and animals and there was no distinction between them. The process of karma and samsara was mechanical and no interference by God was admitted.

This early Indian philosophy affected religion in various ways. Some came to the conclusion that cessation from doing either evil or good would release them from the bondage of Karma and starved themselves to death. Others devised the **varnashrama dhrama** (the law of the caste system, also called Manu Dharma) under the guise of religion and used this philosophy to control others. They taught that if one submitted to the caste system and did as they were told, they could also be born in a higher caste in their next birth!

Some even believed that it was right to oppress those in the lower castes since it was appropriate to make them suffer for the sins of their previous birth and it would redeem them in their next! Mr Swabodh who is a teacher in the Chennai Chinmaya Mission stated that,

> *"When there is Adharma, physical violence is okay at the body level but not at the mind level"*

When Mr. Swabodh refers to Dharma or law, he is talking about the law of brahminism, Manu Dharma (or Varnashrama Dharma). The classic example of this in Indian society today is the story of Idris & Maimon[1]. Similarly the statements of the VHP[2] when nuns were raped in Madhya Pradesh is

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1. The Week, **Lovers on the Run**, Oct 18th 1998.
2. The Hindu, **VHP Justifies Attack on Missionaries**, September 29, 1998.

also from this perspective since Christians are in Adharma when they carry out the Great Commission.

However, in most people it developed an apathy for spiritual truth. Today many classify themselves as agnostics. The fundamental error in this philosophy is that it does not differentiate between humans and animals. However, man is triune consisting of spirit, soul, and body, but, animals consist of only spirit and body. The soul is that part of man that gives him the ability to reason, be creative, and freedom to choose, while, this is absent in animals. Since man did not understand the soul[1] there was no room for God in his thinking, and this philosophy offered man little hope. He then helplessly resorted to ways such as self-starvation, or, opened the door for manipulation by others. Before the ministry of Christ, there was no clear understand of the soul and the path to attain moksa or salvation. God appointed unto men to die once, and after death came the judgment. Jesus Christ came into this world to offer moksa for all mankind. All of us have sinned and our sin separates us from God who is holy. Some dismiss sin and evil very lightly by calling it maya or illusion ,and hold on to the philosophy of monism.

Christianity entered India from the 1st century AD and made a major impact on our nation. However, through syncretism it was corrupted and strayed from the truth into monism and pantheism.

1. M. Deivanayagam and D. Devakala, **Christianity in Hinduism**, Dravidian Religion Trust, 1997, page 92-93.

Chapter 13

Corruption to the Christian Faith Today

Defining the New Age Movement[1] is no easy task. As a social force, it is not identified by a particular creed or single authoritative source book though, there are many New Age source books that offer authoritative explanations. The most helpful way of defining the New Age Movement, and perhaps the most accurate, is to see it as being a "network" of organizations or, to coin the phrase of two New Agers, Jessica Lipnack and Jeffrey Stamps, a metanetwork of organizations that are autonomous, yet bound together. "Networks are composed of self-reliant and autonomous participants-people and organizations who simultaneously function as independent 'wholes' and as interdependent 'parts.'"

Despite the many factors that distinguish groups within the network, the common themes that bind them are as follows:

MONISM: The New Ager believes that the plurality in the cosmos is derived from an ultimate and single source. All diversity flows out from a uniform and divine energy. In The Turning Point (1982), New Age author and physicist Fritjof Capra attempts to point out that the basic malady of the human race is that it has been unable to discern the basic unity of all reality. Monism quite naturally leads to,

PANTHEISM: For New Agers, "God" is an ultimate principle that is identified with the universe. God is all and all is God. The only quest then is for humanity to discover and tap the knowledge of the divine that resides within each person. Separation from God is separation from a conscious or psychological cognition of divinity that resides within the entirety of nature. As Capra hinted at above, the , movement of history therefore must be a movement or motion toward cognition of the divine. Therefore, every person must choose a Sadhana, or path, through which he or she will undergo a transformation that will eventually yield such knowledge of the divine. However, for many, this sadhana may require more than one lifetime to fulfill. Therefore, the New Agers believes in,

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1. Extracted from, **'Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religious and the Occult'**, by George A. Mather and Larry A. Nichols, Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.

REINCARNATION AND KARMA, concepts are derived directly from Hinduism. Virtually all New Agers embrace the notion that good and bad karma will result in retributive justice (punishment or reward) as persons are cast on the wheel of rebirth. Belief in reincarnation furnishes an alternate explanation of the problem of evil to that of Christianity with its concept of HELL and everlasting damnation to the unrighteous.

UNIVERSAL RELIGION: Since discovery of the inner divinity is the ultimate goal of the New Ager, and because monism is the basic theological framework on which the New Age is based, there is really only one religion. All diverse religions of the world are simply alternate paths to the same goal. As there are many trails that lead up a mountain toward the peak (some difficult, others easier), each trail in the end yields the same result, the reaching of the summit. The Universal religion is a mountain with many paths, or sadhanas. No one path is the only correct path.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION: Whichever path an individual chooses, several goals are on the horizon. The first is "personal transformation." This entails undergoing a person mystical or psychic experience that will usually result in a paradigm shift from an "old world" belief system to a realization of "New Age" or "Aquarian" beliefs. The first step in this transformational process is to embrace a monistic worldview. Again, this does not come through cognition of propositional truths or creedal formulations, but rather, through mystical experience.

Monism leads many to think that all the religious paths lead to the same ultimate end. This philosophy is called pantheism, and , they reason that these paths are like rivers that finally lead to the same ocean. This is error since all paths are not the same, and, when two paths contradict each another, both cannot be right. However, many do not realize this and losing hope in their present faith, start believing in the Cycle of Birth hoping for better things in their next birth.

Christianity entered India from the 1st century AD and made a major impact on our nation. However, through syncretism it was corrupted and strayed from the truth into monism and pantheism. Today these atheistic philosophies are entering the Church through the New Age movement.

Conclusion

The religion and culture of India has been highly misunderstood over the years. The term Hinduism was coined by the British about 200 years ago to denote all religions and worships other than Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Many think that the caste system is an integral part of the ancient Indian culture, however this is not true since the ancient culture of India has been one of equality and love for all communities and nations.

Today mission strategies like the people movement approach have ignorantly brought the caste system & racism into the Church, and the Church has become ineffective. The crucial thinking in this strategy is not to disturb the culture of the people involved in the movement into the church, and casteism or racism is considered a part of the culture. Let's say that there was a people movement amongst Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), how would the church handle it? Would it cater to them by having a separate church so that they would feel comfortable? Would you wait 3 to 4 generations before addressing their racist attitudes? By the way did not Hitler claim that he was a Christian?

It is commonly thought that Hinduism is the religion of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas & Vaishyas, and the rest (apart from the religious minorities) were considered animists. Another common misconception today is that Hinduism is very ancient and that it is founded on the Vedas. For example it is commonly stated that 'Buddhism was up against Vedic scriptures', but, is there any evidence for this? The bibliographical evidences indicate that the Vedas are written in the Grantha and Nagari scripts, and according to tradition Veda Vyasa, a Dravidian, compiled and gave written form to the Vedas. The Grantha script belongs to the southern group of scripts and Veda Vyasa being a Dravidian would certainly have used it. Since the earliest evidence for Grantha is only in the 5^{th} c. AD, the Vedas were written rather late. What is more significant is that the Vedas have no relevance in the religion of the Hindus, namely Saivism and Vaishnavism.

The first evidence of Sanskrit is seen only in 150 AD and the neglect of Sanskrit by Asoka, if the language was in use, would be contrary to his practice since his inscriptions are even in Greek and Aramaic apart from Prakrit. In any Sanskrit literature such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahma Sutras or Bhagavad Gita, the Christian influence can be seen since they were all written after the 2^{nd} c AD. History reveals that the doctrines of

incarnation, divine fulfillment of sacrifice, salvation by faith and total surrender to God are not seen in the Indian religions and worships of the pre-Christian era.

Scholars define that while worship is universal, a religion requires literature, philosophy or theology. Before the Christian era, only two religions existed in India, Buddhism and Jainism, and they were agnostic religions. The worships could be broadly classified as Dravidian worship, which is evidenced from the Indus Valley civilization, and the later Vedic worship of the Brahmin ancestors. The Vedic religion reflected in the RgVeda is mainly concerned with the propitiation of divinities associated with nature. The important were such gods as Indra, Varuna, Agni, and Surya, who later lost their significance. The Vedic worship songs existed in some oral form and were later compiled and given written form by Veda Vyasa, after the 2nd c AD since Sanskrit did not exist before that. Of all the religions and worships in India before the Christian era, we find that Buddhism and Jainism were the dominant religions and they were ethical agnostic religions with strong compassion for all creation, but no room for God. Also there was no caste system in India at this time and this is evidenced by Megasthenes.

After the Christian era, we see a new religion arise in India based on a monotheistic doctrine. Scholars indicate that the religion of Siva or Saivism emerged first, and the Vishnu-Krishna religion or Vaishnavism came later as another denomination. Siva was probably the first and only God of the monotheistic religion of the Hindus.

How did this religion arise, since there was nothing in India before Christ to catalyze it? The Dravidian and Vedic worships were polytheistic, and the two religions, Buddhism and Jainism, were agnostic with no room for God. The only logical answer is Christianity in India by the apostles of Christ. There is firm evidence for the Apostle Thomas in India and South India had excellent trade relations with the Roman Empire during the 1st c AD, which leads to cultural and religious exchanges. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is clearly seen in the Saiva Siddhanta literature.

Thus in any Sanskrit literature the Christian influence can be seen since they were all written after the 2nd c AD. For instance in Buddhism, the Hinayana scriptures (in Pali) are the main source for our knowledge of the historic Sakyamuni, while the early Mahayana writings are in Sanskrit. The concept of a divine savior seen in Mahayana Buddhism is clearly the influence of Christianity.

During the time of the Rajputs (from 7th till about the 12th c AD) the the Vedic people in collaboration with the Rajputs devised the caste system to gain and maintain control over India. The Vedic people were called the Brahmins and the Rajputs, the Kshatriyas. The Brahmins became the religious leaders while the Rajputs were the political rulers. In the 8th c AD Adi Sankara, a south Indian Brahmin, misinterpreted the earlier theistic writings and developed an atheistic philosophy called Advaita based on monism and cycle of birth. This philosophy destroyed the theistic faith of the Hindus. Two other interpretations written by other south Indian Brahmins arose to somewhat offset the startling error of Advaita. They were Vishishtadvaita by Ramanuja (11th c AD) and Dvaita by Madhva (13th c AD). However, these were incomplete and supported the caste system.

The fullness of the truth is seen only in Saiva Siddhanta where Meykandar's Siva Gnana Botham sets the standard for the truth. Many do not realize that the roots of Hindu Religion are in South India. Their founding saints - 63 Nayanmars of Saivism and 12 Alvars of Vaishnavism were all from the South and the evidence for early Indian Christianity has been buried all these years in Tamil Literature.

The caste system is deceptively maintained by the philosophies of monism and cycle of birth. Monism (which leads to pantheism) brings a false sense of unity and hope by the deception that no matter what path is chosen, ultimately we will all end up in the same place. However this false sense of unity is soon disturbed by the social disparity which becomes apparent, and this is where the cycle of birth is utilized. It is taught that the one enjoying the higher status is due to his/her karma in the previous birth, and if one would presently follow dharma, i.e. Manu Dharma (the law of the caste system) in this birth, then he/she could also enjoy the higher status in their next birth. Interesting!

The vicious scheme of the caste system, also called brahminism, is still in practice today and many think that it is an ancient part of our culture. However, this is not so, the Dravidian culture is one of equality and love for all communities & nations. The so-called Aryans constitute about 12% of India's population, and the rest who are Dravidians (the so-called Sudras and Panchamas) constitute 88%. Through the caste system the so-called Aryans have maintained Political, Economic and Religious control over the Dravidians for the last 1200 years. Slowly the political and economic controls are changing today due to the democratic process,

however, the religious control is preserved unfortunately by the constitution. The RSS and its sub organizations are working hard deceptively to preserve brahminism, and the religious wing of the RSS, the VHP, has continuously distorted historical facts concerning religion and culture in India to their advantage.

William Jones translated Manu Dharma, the document on the caste system from Sanskrit to English about 200 years ago. This poison then spread throughout Europe and evolved into global Racism based on one's skin color or varna. The caste system is about 1200 years old and is the taproot of racism (based on color) in the world society, which developed less than 200 years ago. For instance why would Shakespeare write Othello (early 17th c AD) where a black North African man marries a white European woman if racism existed in his time?

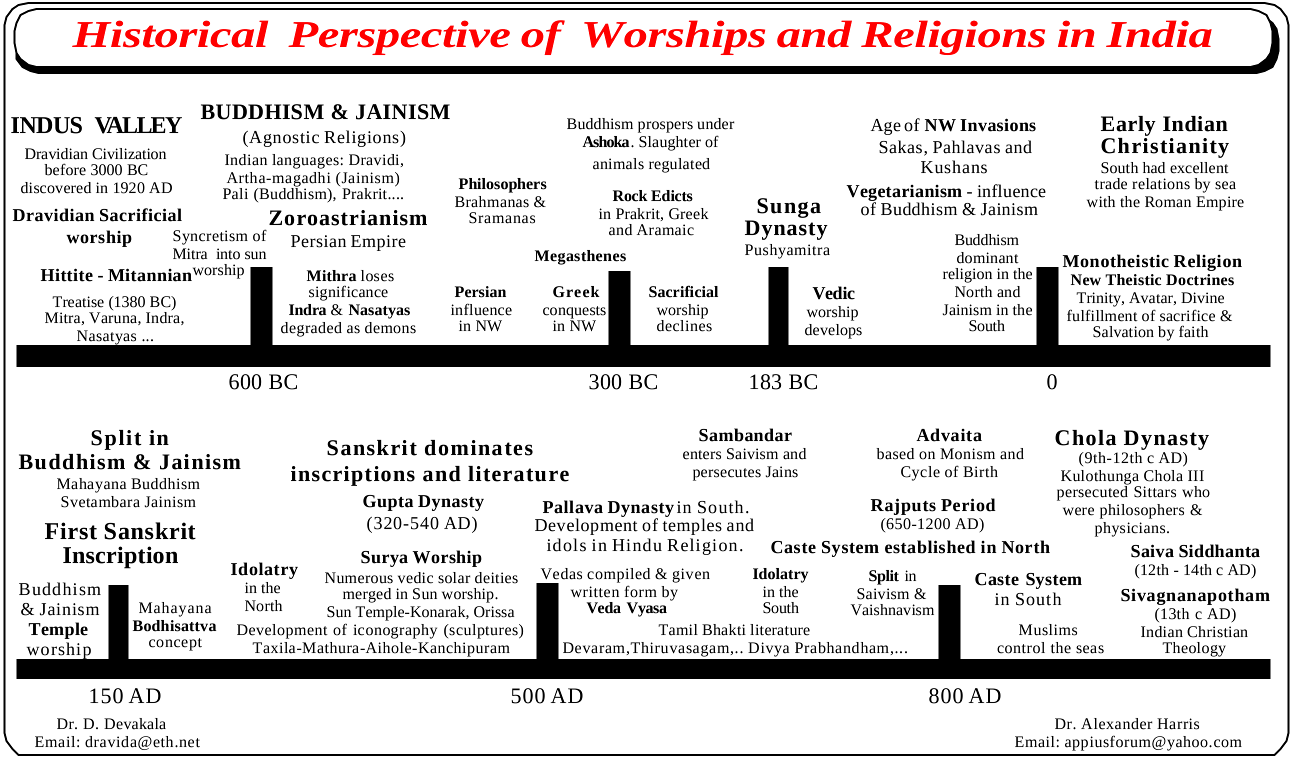
Today the atheistic philosophies of monism and cycle of birth are becoming a global issue through the New Age movement. Christians worldwide are slowly loosing their faith in Christ and the Bible, and are falling into New Age thinking, which is founded on monism and cycle of birth. The New Age has become a sort of religion and many Christians have no idea on its basic doctrines.

True conversion is the change of one's religious viewpoint after being convinced of the Truth. This is a fundamental right of any individual, and this right should never be curbed. However, coercion or deception to change one's religious viewpoint is wrong. Conversion is the voluntary change of ones religion and Article 25 of India's constitution preserves the right of any individual to freely profess, practice and propagate ones faith. Let's preserve this.

Our National Emblem is taken from the famous Sarnath Lion capital of Emperor Ashoka and it is in two parts. The crest shows three lions standing back to back on a flat slab. Actually there are four lions, but the fourth cannot be seen in the picture. The base shows a horse to the left, a bull to the right, and a wheel in between. Below the crest is written the motto, 'Satyameve Jayate' in Nagari script, which translates as truth alone triumphs.

SATYAMEVE JAYATE.

Dr. Alexander Harris
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Historical Perspective of Worships and Religions in India
INDUS VALLEY
Dravidian Civilization before 3000 BC discovered in 1920 AD
Dravidian Sacrificial worship
Hittite - Mitannian
Treatise (1380 BC) Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Nasatyas ...
BUDDHISM & JAINISM
(Agnostic Religions)
Indian languages: Dravidi, Artha-magadhi (Jainism) Pali (Buddhism), Prakrit....
Syncretism of Mitra into sun worship
Zoroastrianism
Persian Empire
Mithra loses significance
Indra & Nasatyas degraded as demons
Philosophers
Brahmanas & Sramanas
Persian influence in NW
Megasthenes
Greek conquests in NW
Buddhism prospers under Ashoka. Slaughter of animals regulated
Rock Edicts
in Prakrit, Greek and Aramaic
Sacrificial worship declines
Sunga Dynasty
Pushyamitra
Vedic worship develops
Age of NW Invasions
Sakas, Pahlavas and Kushans
Vegetarianism - influence of Buddhism & Jainism
Buddhism dominant religion in the North and Jainism in the South
Early Indian Christianity
South had excellent trade relations by sea with the Roman Empire
Monotheistic Religion
New Theistic Doctrines
Trinity, Avatar, Divine fulfillment of sacrifice & Salvation by faith
600 BC
300 BC
183 BC
0
Split in Buddhism & Jainism
Mahayana Buddhism
Svetambara Jainism
First Sanskrit Inscription
Buddhism & Jainism Temple worship
Mahayana Bodhisattva concept
Idolatry in the North
Sanskrit dominates inscriptions and literature
Gupta Dynasty
(320-540 AD)
Surya Worship
Numerous vedic solar deities merged in Sun worship.
Sun Temple-Konarak, Orissa
Development of iconography (sculptures)
Taxila-Mathura-Aihole-Kanchipuram
Sambandar
enters Saivism and persecutes Jains
Pallava Dynasty in South.
Development of temples and idols in Hindu Religion.
Vedas compiled & given written form by Veda Vyasa
Idolatry in the South
Tamil Bhakti literature
Devaram,Thiruvasagam,.. Divya Prabhandham,...
Advaita
based on Monism and Cycle of Birth
Rajputs Period
(650-1200 AD)
Caste System established in North
Split in Saivism & Vaishnavism
Caste System in South
Muslims control the seas
Chola Dynasty
(9th-12th c AD)
Kulothunga Chola III persecuted Sittars who were philosophers & physicians.
Saiva Siddhanta
(12th - 14th c AD)
Sivagnanapotham
(13th c AD)
Indian Christian Theology
150 AD
500 AD
800 AD
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